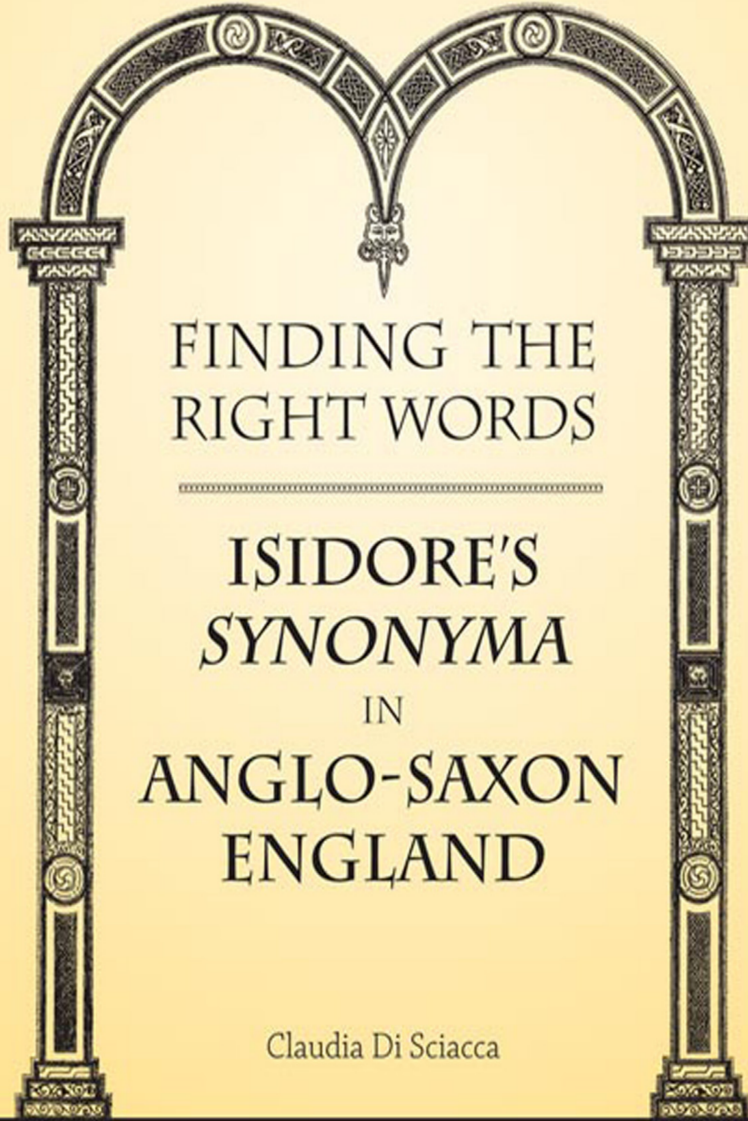


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FINDING THE
RIGHT WORDS

ISIDORE'S
SYNONYMA
IN
ANGLO-SAXON
ENGLAND

Claudia Di Sciacca

FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS:
ISIDORE'S *SYNONYMA* IN ANGLO-
SAXON ENGLAND

CLAUDIA DI SCIACCA

**Finding the Right Words:
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*Sag mir wo die Blumen sind
Wo sind sie geblieben?*

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Preface

This book is an extensively revised version of my PhD thesis submitted to the University of Cambridge in June 2002. It concerns the transmission and use made in Anglo-Saxon England of the work by Isidore of Seville known as *Synonyma*. Generally classified among Isidore's minor works, the *Synonyma* enjoyed a wide and long-lasting success in the medieval West and they became one of the classics of medieval spirituality as well as the main and most characteristic source of the so-called *stilus ysydorianus*, a rhymed, rhythmical prose the main feature of which is the pervasive use of synonymical variation and paraphrase and which was to become one of the four major kinds of Latin *Kunstprosa* in the Middle Ages.

Anglo-Saxon England was particularly receptive to the *Synonyma*, which represented a rich source of devotional and penitential motifs as well as a model of style. This study provides a general survey of Isidore's life and activity as a bishop in early seventh-century Visigothic Spain as well as an introduction to the *Synonyma*, their theme, structure, and distinctive style. Successive chapters focus on the transmission of the *Synonyma* to England, providing a close examination of the Anglo-Saxon branch of their manuscript tradition, and on their 'vernacularization,' that is translations, adaptations, and any use of the Isidorian text as a source in Old English texts. Such vernacularization seems to have extensively occurred especially within anonymous homilies. At least a lengthy adaptation of the *Synonyma* is attested in Vercelli homily xxii, and a detailed analysis of the content and style of the latter homily shows the original and ingenious use of the Latin source by the Anglo-Saxon homilist. The *Synonyma* were also the main ultimate source for the *ubi sunt* topos, a favourite theme not only in Old English homilies, but in Anglo-Saxon literature as a whole. A survey of this motif in both Old English and Anglo-Latin prose and verse shows the ingenuity and ease with which the Anglo-Saxon writers adopted and adapted their sources, as well as

the creative tension between Latinate Christian material and rhetorical devices typical of the vernacular literary tradition.

Further evidence shows that the *Synonyma* exerted significant influence on devotional literature, and also played a relevant role in the tradition of Anglo-Latin scholastic colloquies. Indeed, the synonymical style may well have been implemented in the teaching of Latin by the Benedictine Reformers, among whom may have been Æthelwold himself. The *Synonyma* can definitely contribute to our understanding of the pedagogical practices of late Anglo-Saxon England and close study of the text offers new insights into the interaction of Latin and vernacular within the essentially bilingual culture of Anglo-Saxon England.

This book could not have been completed without the generous help and support of teachers, friends, and family. My studies in Cambridge have benefited enormously from the scholarship of my three supervisors, Professor Michael Lapidge, Dr Rosalind Love, and Professor Andy Orchard. I particularly profited from the generosity, intellectual guidance, and scholarly insights of the latter, and to him I would therefore like to express my deepest gratitude. I also wish to thank Professor Patrizia Lendinara, who first taught me Old English. Throughout my studies she has consistently offered me scholarly advice, practical help, and moral support. The long process of revision from the thesis to this book has profited from the insightful comments of my two PhD examiners, Professor Malcolm Godden and Dr Richard Dance, as well as from the stimulating remarks of the two UTP anonymous referees who have read the manuscript. I have also learnt a lot from the exchanges with a number of Anglo-Saxonists and medievalists over the last years. In particular, I would like to thank Professors T.N. Hall and C.D. Wright, whose work has been of much inspiration.

My warmest thanks to Emily Thornbury for reading most of the manuscript and saving me from numerous blunders. Needless to say, the infelicities of expression and mistakes that remain are entirely my own. Emily has also been my *longa manus* in the Cambridge UL, and Elena Alcamesi has always been generous with bibliographical help and advice over word-processing queries. I am also grateful to Jacques Elfassi for thought-provoking discussions

on Isidore and the *Synonyma*, and to Dr Suzanne Rancourt, Humanities Senior Editor, and Barbara Porter, Associate Managing Editor at UTP, for their help and patience. It has certainly been a pleasure working with them.

Finally, I owe a great deal to my parents, Aldo and Magda, and to the friends who have stood by me during this long venture: Katherine Abell, Sara Diemoz, Agathe Dorsch, Trude Macrì, Gianmauro Merendino, Vittorio Montemaggi, Monica Raffaele Addamo, Janie Steen, and Prisca Straub. Last but not least, thanks to Vladimiro Caminiti for his advice on how to keep going strong, and to Raffaella Palumbo for being there in a stressful time.

CLAUDIA DI SCIACCA
Udine, 2 April 2007

Abbreviations

ACMRS Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

AL Archivos Leoneses

ALL I Michael Lapidge. Anglo-Latin Literature: 600–899. London and Rio Grande, OH: Hambledon Press, 1996

ALL II Michael Lapidge. Anglo-Latin Literature: 900–1066. London and Rio Grande, OH: Hambledon Press, 1993

ALMA Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi (Bulletin du Cange)

ASE Anglo-Saxon England

ASPR Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records

BAV Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

BEASE Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg, eds. The Blackwell Encyclo-paedia of Anglo-Saxon England. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999

BCLL Michael Lapidge and Richard Sharpe. A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature 400–1200 Royal Irish Academy. Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources, Ancillary Publications 1. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1985

BGST Bibliotheca Germanica. Studi e Testi

BL British Library

BM Bibliothèque Municipale

BN Bibliothèque Nationale

BS Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

Cameron Angus Cameron. 'A List of Old English Texts.' In A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English, ed. Angus Cameron and Roberta Frank. TOES 2 Toronto: UTP, 1973, 27–306

Catalogue Neil R. Ker. Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957; reissued Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990

CCCC Cambridge, Corpus Christi College

CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series Latina

CLA Elias A. Lowe. *Codices latini antiquiores*. 11 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934–71; 2nd ed. of vol. II, 1972; cited by volume and no.

CPG Geerard Maurits. *Clavis Patrum graecorum*. 5 vols. and Supplement. Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–98

CPL Eligius Dekkers and Emil Gaar. *Clavis Patrum latinorum*. 3rd ed. Turnhout: Brepols, 1995

CPPMA Jan J. Machielsen. *Clavis patristica pseudepigraphorum mediæ ævi*. 5 vols. CCSL IA/B, IIA/B. IIIA. Turnhout: Brepols, 1990–2003

CSASE Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England

CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

CUP Cambridge University Press

DIAS Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

EEMF Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile

EETS Early English Texts Society

– o.s. – original series

– s.s. – supplementary series

ES Englische Studien

Handlist Helmut Gneuss. *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*. MRTS 241. Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2001

IEA Institut d'Études Augustiniennes

Index Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz. *Index scriptorum latino-rum mediæ ævi hispanorum*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones científicas – Patronato Menéndez Pelayo, 1959

JEGP Journal of English and Germanic Philology

JML The Journal of Medieval Latin

KCLMS King's College London Medieval Studies

LBL Les Belles Lettres

LCL Loeb Classical Library

MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica

– AA – Auctores Antiquissimi

– Ep. – Epistolae

– ES – Epistolae Selectae

– PLAC – Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini

MRTS Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies

NM Neuphilologische Mitteilungen

OUP Oxford University Press

PG Jacques-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia graeco-latina*. 161 vols. and Index. Paris: 1857–66

PIMS Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies

PL Jacques-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia latina*. 217 vols. Paris: 1844–55; Index 4 vols. Paris: 1864.

PLS Adalbert G. Hamman, ed. *Patrologiae latinae supplementum* 5 vols. Paris: 1958–74

PMLA Publications of the Modern Language Association

PRIA Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy

RB *Revue bénédictine*

RHT *Revue d'histoire des textes*

SASLC Frederick M. Biggs, Thomas D. Hill, and Paul E. Szarmach, eds., with the assistance of Karen Hammond. *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Cul-ture: A Trial Version*. Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies. State University of New York at Binghamton, 1990

SASLC I Frederick M. Biggs, Thomas D. Hill, Paul E. Szarmach, and E. Gordon Whatley, eds., with the assistance of Deborah A. Oosterhouse. *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture Volume I: Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-Germain-de-Prés, and Acta Sanctorum*. Kalamazoo, MI: WMU. Medieval Institute Publications, 2001

Settimane di Studio Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo

SHM I Robert E. McNally, ed. *Scriptores Hiberniae minores*. I.

CCSL 108B. Turnhout: Brepols, 1973

SHM II Joseph F. Kelly, ed. *Scriptores Hiberniae minores*. II. CCSL 108C. Turnhout: Brepols, 1974

SLH *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*

SM *Studi Medievali*

Te. Tra. I Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi, eds. *La trasmissione dei testi latini del medioevo. Medieval Latin Texts and Their Transmission*. I. Florence: Sismel. Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2004

TOES Toronto Old English Series

TUEP *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englische Philologie*

UEP University of Exeter Press

UL University Library

UP University Press

UTP University of Toronto Press

VCSS *Variorum Collected Studies Series*

WMU Western Michigan University

Biblical quotations are from *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam uersionem*, ed. Robert Weber. 4th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994. All lexical concordances have been searched on the Old English Dictionary URL: <http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/> (last accessed March 2007). I have standardized Latin spelling in titles of texts and quotations from printed editions, but not in titles of journals or series. When not otherwise specified, all translations from Latin and Old English are my own.

FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS:
ISIDORE'S *SYNONYMA* IN ANGLO-
SAXON ENGLAND

CHAPTER ONE

Isidore of Seville: His Life and Culture

Isidore of Seville is one of the outstanding figures in the history of the medieval church and culture in the West. His fellow countrymen and bishops paid him a high tribute less than twenty years after his death in 636, when they called him ‘nostri quoque saeculi doctor egregius, ecclesiae catholicae nouissimum decus’ [excellent teacher of our age, the most recent ornament of the Catholic church].¹ His fame was still current when, six centuries later, Dante placed Isidore next to the Venerable Bede and Richard of St Victor in the Heaven of the Sun.²

The sources about Isidore’s life are scarce, and we lack a fully detailed and reliable account of it. Many circumstances must be inferred either from his works or from the acts of the contemporary Hispano-Visigothic ecclesiastical councils.³ Soon after his death in 636, Redemptus, a cleric from Seville educated at the school of Isidore, composed the *Epistola de transitu S. Isidori*,⁴ and seems to have addressed it to Braulio, bishop of Saragossa (631–51), Isidore’s disciple and personal friend.⁵ Redemptus’s *Epistola*, however, is not so much a biography as a highly emotional and moving account of Isidore’s last days, which coincided with the Holy Week and Easter of 636.⁶ Redemptus focuses on the saint and his exemplary Christian death, which occurred after he had taken his confession and communion in front of the people of Seville exactly as prescribed for the *paenitentia canonica in extremis* in the Visigothic ritual.⁷ (Incidentally, according to Redemptus’s account, in his last moments Isidore pronounced words from the *Synonyma*.)⁸

On the whole, the most authoritative contemporary biography of Isidore is the so-called *Renotatio Isidori* written by Braulio of Saragossa around 637.⁹ The *Renotatio* is in fact just a succinct biographical note, providing some details on Isidore’s life and personality as well as his activity as both a bishop and a scholar,

which Braulio apparently conceived as an appendix¹⁰ to Isidore's *De uiris illustribus*,¹¹ and indeed it has been transmitted in this form in a number of manuscripts. The main interest of Braulio's *Renotatio*, however, lies in the catalogue of Isidore's works that follows the brief biographical introduction. This catalogue can be considered relatively complete: it lists seventeen texts, omitting quite a number of Isidore's minor works, but it hints at them in the final entry: 'Sunt et alia eius uiri multa opuscula et in ecclesia Dei multo cum ornamento instrumenta' [There are also many other little works and documents by this man, with great distinction in the church of God].¹² Moreover, Braulio's *Renotatio* has long been taken to be the most authoritative source for the chronology of Isidore's works,¹³ although its chronological outline has recently been questioned.¹⁴

Another contemporary of Isidore, Ildefonsus, bishop of Toledo († 667),¹⁵ commemorated the bishop of Seville in the eighth chapter of his own *De uiris illustribus*.¹⁶ This chapter consists of little more than a brief notice, largely based on Braulio's *Renotatio*, but it is less detailed than the latter, listing only ten Isidorian works against Braulio's seventeen, possibly because he includes only the Isidorian texts available in Toledo.¹⁷ Braulio's *Renotatio* was later drawn on and expanded in the so-called *Abbreuiatio de uita S. Isidori*.¹⁸ This text is the work of an anonymous scholar, and probably dates from the eleventh century, when Isidore's remains were moved from Seville – under Muslim control since 711 – to León.¹⁹ Henceforth, Isidore's legend begins. Fabulous accounts of his apparitions and miracles multiply,²⁰ culminating in the extended and colourful *Vita S. Isidori*,²¹ a biography which has traditionally been attributed to the thirteenth-century cleric Lucas de Tuy, but which is in fact an anonymous text originating in twelfth-century León.²²

Only Isidore's first name is known. The manuscript tradition has sometimes added the appellative *iunior*, which Mommsen considered to be a *cognomen alterum*, while according to Arévalo it served the purpose of distinguishing Isidore of Seville from Isidore of Pelusium, who flourished in the fourth century.²³ However, it is more likely that *iunior* referred simply to the fact that Isidore succeeded his elder brother Leander as bishop of Seville.²⁴ Nor do we know exactly when he was born. Traditionally, the year of

Isidore's birth has been reckoned to fall between 560 and 570 on the basis of the date of his ascent to episcopacy. The chronology of this event, however, is not absolutely certain either, and can be placed at some point between the summer of 599 and the end of 601.²⁵ Two councils held in the first quarter of the sixth century in Visigothic Gaul, namely the council of Agde (506) and that of Arles (524), both fixed at thirty the minimum age for would-be priests and bishops.²⁶ Eventually, the fourth council of Toledo, chaired by Isidore himself, confirmed such a limit.²⁷ It can therefore be said that Isidore was born around 570;²⁸ he then retained his office for approximately forty years,²⁹ until his death in 636.

Isidore belonged to a Hispano-Roman family. Before his birth, they were based in or around Carthage until the city was involved in the violent political turmoil of south Spain in the central years of the sixth century,³⁰ as a result of which Isidore's parents were forced to leave their city. Isidore was the youngest member of the family, which included his father, Severianus; his mother, Turtura (although her name is not certain);³¹ two brothers, Leander, the eldest and Isidore's predecessor as bishop of Seville, and Fulgentius, who was to become bishop of Ecija; finally, his sister, Florentine, who was to become a nun. Isidore's father was in all probability of Hispano-Roman descent and a prominent citizen of Carthage.³² The city and especially its Hispano-Roman population suffered violent attacks and pillages during three years (549–52) of fanatical anti-Catholic terror on the part of the Visigothic King Agila († 555).³³ In 551 the rebel Athanagild summoned the Byzantines to help him against Agila, and they disembarked in south Spain, in the region of Merida, in 552 and probably in Carthage itself in 554. It has often been speculated that Severianus belonged to those Hispano-Roman circles which preferred the 'barbarian' Visigoths to the debatable attempt at a 'Roman' restoration by the Byzantines.³⁴ Consequently, the departure of the whole family from Carthage to Seville in the early 550s has been interpreted as the result of a massive deportation of Hispano-Romans on the part of the Byzantines or of a personal banishment decreed against Severianus,³⁵ or of a voluntary decision.³⁶

However, Fontaine and Cazier have convincingly argued that Severianus and his family were, in fact, the victims of retaliatory

measures on the part of the Visigothic authorities of Carthage.³⁷ The city remained faithful to Agila, and his local representatives most likely suspected the Hispano-Roman notables of supporting the return of the Byzantines. The ban against Severianus and his family must, therefore, have been enforced in the early 550s, when the arrival of the Byzantines was feared as imminent, and certainly before Agila was put to death by his own supporters in 555. In all likelihood, then, Isidore was born long after his family had left Carthage, and, although no direct evidence exists in this regard, it is generally agreed that he was a native of Seville.³⁸ Finally, the fact that the exile of Isidore's family was the result of a reprisal on the part of the Visigoths must not be seen as contradicting the often enthusiastic support eventually offered by Leander and then by Isidore himself to the Visigothic dynasty.³⁹ Indeed, the cooperation with Toledo as well as the apparently nationalistic feelings of Isidore's *Laus Spaniae*,⁴⁰ and his friendship with King Sisebut,⁴¹ must be interpreted as a deliberate, political effort to guide the conversion of the new Germanic rulers and to act as a mediator between them and the Hispano-Roman population.⁴²

Severianus must have been able to provide at least his eldest son, Leander, with a good education before he and his wife died prematurely. Like his friend Gregory the Great,⁴³ and an eminent contemporary Iberian bishop, Martin of Braga († 580),⁴⁴ Leander was a monk and in 578 became bishop of Seville and metropolitan of the surrounding region, Betica.⁴⁵ Being the eldest brother, it fell on him to assume the responsibilities of head of the family, including the task of bringing up and educating Isidore,⁴⁶ according to the antique practice of familial tuition.⁴⁷ Whether Isidore followed Leander's career step by step, first as a monk and then as bishop of Seville, and whether he was educated in a monastic school or in an episcopal one, has long been debated. Pérez Llamazares and Madoz, for instance, believed that there is no evidence to prove that Isidore was a monk, as none of his contemporary 'biographers' mention this fact.⁴⁸ Neither does Isidore's own *Regula monachorum*⁴⁹ apparently provide any relevant evidence, as it was compiled when Isidore had already become bishop of Seville and he could therefore have written it simply as a reflex of his pastoral care. At any rate, we know that the young Isidore lived with Leander,⁵⁰ and since the latter became bishop in 578, it is most likely that the former received at

least part of his education in his brother's monastery.⁵¹ Moreover, attending a monastic school seems to have been part of what may be called the standard curriculum of seventh-century Spanish bishops.⁵² On the other hand, to state that Isidore attended a monastic school as opposed to an episcopal one,⁵³ or vice versa, would be an anachronistic attempt to apply later medieval distinctions to an age when the range of schooling options was very diverse and varied greatly in different areas of the West.⁵⁴ Moreover, as Fontaine has shown, both monastic and episcopal schools in Visigothic Spain offered a very similar curriculum, which was very likely derived from the same Provençal models, especially that of Lérins, and was based on the study of Holy Writ and patristic literature.⁵⁵

It would therefore be safer to describe Isidore's education as 'polyvalent',⁵⁶ that is both monastic and clerical, insofar as he was brought up by Leander as a monk *and* a bishop. The context of the familial tuition provided by Leander, who was himself a monk and a bishop, made it possible to combine contemplative and pastoral education.⁵⁷ Isidore, however, acutely resented the duality implicit in such an upbringing.⁵⁸ As we shall see, Isidore's split tendencies emerge clearly in a text such as the *Synonyma*, divided as it is between the lyrical and spiritual monologue of the first book and the didactic and normative attitude of the second, between the painful contrition for one's sins and the gnomic assertiveness of Stoic-influenced ethics.⁵⁹

Isidore certainly owed the best of his education to his brother's personal tuition,⁶⁰ particularly with regard to the learning and methods of the antique schools,⁶¹ where a premium was put on the teaching of Latin. Even in a highly romanized area such as Spain, by the late sixth century proficiency in Latin had noticeably deteriorated, a fact which would later become a matter of concern for Isidore himself.⁶²

Isidore's knowledge of Latin literature, and in particular of classical Latin literature, is still one of the most problematic questions in Isidorian studies.⁶³ Isidore seems to have mastered the whole range of Latin literature, although it is generally agreed that he had little, if any, direct access to classical authors.⁶⁴ Most likely Isidore knew them second-hand through late commentaries, anthologies of scholia and *excerpta*, collections of scholastic

exercises, glossed and annotated editions, introductory handbooks or *isagogae*, most of which are now lost.⁶⁵

The cathedral library of Seville, where Isidore completed and refined his education, must have been of considerable size and remarkably well stocked.⁶⁶ We are informed about its contents by the so-called *Versus in bibliotheca*,⁶⁷ a series of elegiac couplets modelled on Martial's epigrams,⁶⁸ which were originally intended as inscriptions placed beneath the portrait of the author to whom they referred.⁶⁹ Thus the couplets divided Isidore's library into different sectors, each allocating the books by the author(s) in question. In the *Versus in bibliotheca*, several Christian authors from late antiquity are named and highly praised, ranging from important figures of Greek Christianity, such as Origen and John Chrysostom, to Latin Fathers, such as Augustine, Ambrose, Hilary, and Jerome. The *Versus in bibliotheca* also concern contemporary figures, such as Leander and Gregory the Great, as well as Christian Latin poets such as Juvenius, Prudentius, Sedulius, and Avitus.⁷⁰ The library must, however, have also included pagan classical authors, since one of the first lines of the *Versus in bibliotheca* reads: 'Sunt hic plura sacra sunt hic mundi alia plura' [Here there are many holy (books), here there are many other worldly (books)].⁷¹ In fact, the only pagan authors whose names are explicitly mentioned are Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Persius, Lucan, and Statius, and they are only named in some apparently polemic lines where Isidore invites his readers to give up pagan poets and points out Christian alternatives to them.⁷²

These lines, however, should by no means be read as a condemnation of pagan literature *tout court*. Isidore is no Christian apologist,⁷³ and if he tried to 'Christianize' the vast heritage of classical authors and to merge it with Christian culture⁷⁴ – the project inspiring his *Etymologiae*⁷⁵ – he also acknowledged the 'legitimacy' and autonomy of pagan learning.⁷⁶ The main models inspiring Isidore in his attempt at an assimilation of the antique culture into the Christian one have been identified in Lactantius's *Institutiones diuinae*, Cassiodorus's *Institutiones* (especially their second book, devoted to the *saeculariae litterae*), and above all Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*.⁷⁷ In particular, in his *Etymologiae* Isidore would '[fulfil] Augustine's prescription in *De doctrina christiana* that an exegete should be a Christian Varro,

applying an encyclopedic textual knowledge to the study of Scriptures and Christian literature.’⁷⁸ Indeed, in Isidore we can observe the results of Augustine’s program to co-opt pagan writings for the sake of a Christian *grammatica*, so that secular, heathen culture is subordinated to the study and understanding of the Holy Writ.⁷⁹

Like Augustine and Jerome, Isidore warns only against certain genres of pagan poetry, especially the alexandrine verse with erotic and mythological content, and its western offspring, Latin elegiac poetry.⁸⁰ As to the rest, however, Isidore is well aware that pagan learning represents a ‘sana sobriaque doctrina’ [a sane and sober learning].⁸¹ The *Versus in bibliotheca*, therefore, already introduce us to Isidore’s eclecticism, and, in particular, to the two major components of his cultural and spiritual world, namely classical heritage⁸² and patristic lore.⁸³ His attempt as a man of God and as a man of letters was to synthesize and balance these two components for the sake of his flock, whose present needs and demands he always bore in mind and was always eager to satisfy.⁸⁴

Isidore’s library must also have contained Latin translations of Greek texts, including at least some works by Origen and John Chrysostom, since both are mentioned in the *Versus in bibliotheca*,⁸⁵ and possibly also Latin translations of Greek handbooks and *compendia* of rhetorical, scientific, and technical content.⁸⁶ Isidore is very unlikely to have known any Greek himself,⁸⁷ and it has been argued that the Latin translations of Greek works he consulted very likely originated in Africa, as fifth- and sixth-century Africa was the seat of the most active centres of translation of Greek texts in the West.⁸⁸ (Indeed, significant contributions to the collections of the episcopal library of Seville must have come from the African refugees who fled Vandal persecutions against Catholics and, eventually, the decline of Byzantine rule.)⁸⁹

Public teaching of Greek had ceased in the West since the end of the fourth century, and in Spain, in particular, documentation in Greek is almost non-existent between the fourth and the sixth century.⁹⁰ Admittedly, in Isidore’s day southern Spain was still partly controlled by the Byzantines; thus a cultivated man such as Isidore might have had the opportunity to learn at least some

Greek. However, Greek was then not only the language of an invading army, but also the language of the theological controversy of the ‘Three Chapters,’ in which the Byzantine emperors supported doctrines close to monophysitism.⁹¹ Indeed, after the Arian Visigoths converted to Catholicism in 589,⁹² the Byzantines no longer represented in Spain the custodians of Roman orthodoxy against the Arian heresy. On the contrary, it was now the turn of the Catholic Visigothic dynasty to defend the Roman orthodoxy against the heterodox doctrines arriving from the east.⁹³ Nor does Isidore seem to have known any Hebrew. Therefore the praise lavished on him in the *Vita S. Isidori*, where Isidore is presented as learned ‘latinis, graecis et hebraeis litteris,’⁹⁴ must be considered as a cliché, modelled on the epithet traditionally (and this time deservedly) given to Jerome, the *uir trilinguus*.

Under Leander’s supervision Isidore apparently acquired more than a broad education. He also became aware of the political dimension of such a prestigious ecclesiastical office as that of bishop of Seville and metropolitan of Betica.⁹⁵ Leander was in the foreground in the events that led to the conversion of the Visigoths from Arianism to Catholicism. He first succeeded in converting the Visigothic prince Hermenegild († 585), who had been entrusted by his father, King Leovigild († 586), with the local government of Seville and the surrounding area. Later, when it came to open war between the king and his son, and the latter entered into an alliance with the Byzantines, Leander went to Byzantium to plead the rebel prince’s cause. There he befriended the future Pope Gregory the Great, who would eventually dedicate to Leander his *Moralia in Iob*, a work much appreciated and drawn on by Isidore, and an important source for his *Sententiae*⁹⁶ and *Synonyma*.⁹⁷ Eventually, Hermenegild’s uprising failed: Seville was besieged and reconquered by King Leovigild in 583–4 and the rebel prince was exiled to Tarragona, where he was subsequently killed in an ambush.

The restoration of Leovigild’s authority was followed by retaliatory measures against prominent Catholics, above all bishops. Isidore himself in his *Historia gothorum* denounces this ‘furor arrianae perfidiae’ [fury of Arian perfidy],⁹⁸ but he does not say whether his brother or himself, or both, were victims of it.

Only the *Vita S. Isidori* mentions an ill-defined form of persecution that Isidore suffered in those years,⁹⁹ but this text is probably not a reliable source.¹⁰⁰ However, things soon changed, as Leovigild died in April or May 586 and his successor, Recared, converted to Catholicism. In the third council of Toledo, summoned by the new king himself and held on 4 and 5 May 589, Recared's conversion was to be followed by that of the attending Arian bishops and virtually by the whole Visigothic people. It is noteworthy that, although this council was a *Reichskonzil* held under the king's chairmanship, the spiritual supervision of the proceedings was assigned to Leander of Seville and to the abbot Eutropius.¹⁰¹

Leander died sometime between 599 and 601,¹⁰² ten years after the political and religious unification of Spain had been achieved, a process in which he had played a leading role. Isidore, who had experienced those same dramatic events, succeeded him soon afterwards and admirably carried out the task of organizing and consolidating a Spanish national church within a unified Visigothic kingdom.¹⁰³ In this respect, his two major achievements are to be seen in the canons issued by the second provincial council of Seville (619) and, especially, by the fourth national council of Toledo, held in 633 under Isidore's chairmanship.¹⁰⁴ The council of Seville discussed and regulated important questions of juridical, administrative, and disciplinary interest;¹⁰⁵ it was chaired by Sisebut, king of Visigothic Spain from 612 to 621 and a personal acquaintance of Isidore,¹⁰⁶ who dedicated to the king his treatise *De natura rerum*,¹⁰⁷ and, apparently, also his major work, the *Etymologiae*.¹⁰⁸

The chairmanship of the fourth council of Toledo, on the other hand, sealed the undisputed pre-eminence Isidore had achieved within the Spanish church, and his talent as an ecclesiastical leader and administrator fully revealed itself in the canons issued by the Toledan council. The latter meticulously regulated most relevant ecclesiastical matters, particularly with regard to the liturgy and the education and training of the clergy,¹⁰⁹ thus revising and fixing for the years to come the Visigothic liturgical corpus.¹¹⁰ The canons of the Toledan council were eventually to be included in the *Collectio hispana*, the most comprehensive and widespread of medieval Spanish canon law collections,¹¹¹ destined to exert a strong influence on the *Collectio canonum hibernensis*.¹¹²

It is, however, to his role of heir of the grammatical and rhetorical lore of the antique schools that Isidore best owes his fame. In particular, he put the four grammatical categories of *differentia*, *analogia*, *glossa*, and *etymologia* at the service of a new Christian system of knowledge as outlined in his celebrated encyclopaedia, the *Etymologiae*.

The Role of Grammar in Isidore's Production

It is against the background of the political and religious vicissitudes of the young Visigothic kingdom that Isidore's literary production must be set. Isidore consistently acted as a thoughtful shepherd and conceived his works in answer to the specific needs of his church. Indeed, it can be said that a pastoral and didactic perspective enlightens and underlies all Isidore's writings. His production, although not as vast as that of Augustine or Jerome, is the most considerable of the seventh century for its breadth and, what is more, for its cultural and spiritual value.¹¹³

Isidore dealt with virtually every field of contemporary human knowledge, both secular and sacred.¹¹⁴ In this endeavour, his main means of analysis, classification, and synthesis of an immense bulk of data were provided by four grammatical categories, namely difference, etymology, analogy, and gloss.¹¹⁵ These categories – originally established by the antique grammarians – make up the very framework of Isidore's culture and constitute his main epistemological tools, which he applies even to crucial matters of Christian doctrine: if for Isidore grammar is a 'totalitarian' discipline,¹¹⁶ even Christian theology and spirituality are subject to this dictatorship.

The category of *differentia* referred to the method of distinguishing between words and of choosing the most appropriate form of expression, which was widely practised in the antique schools of grammar and rhetoric. At the same time, however, *differentia* was also a method of analysis of dialectic.¹¹⁷ One might compare the two definitions of *differentia* that Isidore gives in his *Etymologiae* I, xxxi, and II, xxv, 2:

Differentia est species definitionis, quam scriptores
artium de eodem et altero nominant.¹¹⁸

[*Differentia* is a kind of definition, by which the writers of grammars name one thing and (its) opposite.]

Nam posito primo genere, deinde species et alia, quae vicina esse possunt, subiungimus ac discretis communibus separamus, tamdiu inter-ponentes differentias, quousque ad proprium eius de quo quaerimus signata eius expressione perveniamus, utputa: ‘homo est animal rationale, mortale, terrenum, bipes, risu capax.’

[For first of all we establish the genus, then we subjoin the species and other things which can be directly related, and separate these off by marking off common characteristics. We keep on bringing in differences, until we arrive at the property of the object of our investigation in an unambiguous definition. For example: ‘Man is a rational animal, mortal, terrestrial, two-footed, able to laugh.’]¹¹⁹

In the light of this philosophical perspective, *differentia* therefore not only helps to define the exact meaning of a lexeme, but it also helps to identify the true essence of a given object, by distinguishing the individual from others of the same species or genus.

Isidore defines the category of *analogia* as ‘similium comparatio siue proportio’ [comparison or proportion between similar objects].¹²⁰ In this respect, *differentia* and *analogia* are complementary, in so far as the two categories imply two cognitive processes – the identification of a given object by distinguishing it from others, and the analogical association between distinct individuals – which in turn are the two complementary stages of knowledge, namely analysis and synthesis. Like *differentia*, the category of *analogia* is also borrowed from the antique grammarians.¹²¹ However, in his interpretation of *analogia*, Isidore combined grammatical learning with both pagan philosophy and Christian exegesis. The former had applied the analogical method to identify the similarities between microcosm and macrocosm, while the latter had ultimately relied on analogy in its allegorical interpretation of the Holy Writ.

Closely related to the category of analogy is that of *glossa*.¹²² Indeed, according to Isidore's usage of the term, *glossa* could be explained as the result of an analogical association between words, insofar as a rare or difficult Latin (or Greek) term is explained by means of others of similar meaning and more common usage. In other words, the two categories of analogy and gloss, when combined together, result in synonymy,¹²³ and it is therefore their association that provides the formal framework of the *Synonyma*.

The category of *etymologia* is the most important of the four, as it represented for Isidore the most versatile research tool as well as the one that granted the deepest knowledge of a given object according to the principle that *in origine ueritas*.¹²⁴ It is through this category that Isidore was to collect and synthesize the material and spiritual world of both pagan and Christian antiquity in his *Etymologiae*,¹²⁵ thus saving it from its incipient corruption and putting it at the service of the new Hispano-Visigothic society.¹²⁶ Indeed it has been argued that Isidore's main intent as a writer was that of bridging the ever-widening gap between the heritage of antiquity and the needs and potentialities of his contemporaries.¹²⁷ In this light, Isidore's rescuing of the past does not obey merely restorative goals, nor is it inspired by an anachronistic obsession with a *reditus in originem*,¹²⁸ but it aims at negotiating the passage to modernity.¹²⁹ That Isidore's project was ingenious is plainly demonstrated by the extraordinary success that his encyclopaedia enjoyed not only among his contemporaries but also among later generations of medieval readers.¹³⁰

Like the other three categories, etymology was inherited from pagan Hellenism, that is from the alexandrine grammarians. However, it can indeed be traced as far back as the philosophers of classical Greece and their reflections on language as a means of knowledge. Plato had devoted one of his major dialogues, namely *Cratylus*, to this subject, but it was the Stoics, in particular, who considered the etymological study of words capable of attaining the true and ultimate essence of the objects designated by those same words. The individual source to which Isidore's conception of etymology is more indebted is, however, Varro,¹³¹ who had devoted three books of his treatise *De lingua latina* to etymology and whom Isidore would celebrate as the most influential of Latin encyclopaedists in his *Etymologiae*.¹³²

Indeed, Isidorian etymology is even more complex than the Varronian one. If Varro had differentiated between four degrees of etymology, Isidore combined six different interpretations and traditions of etymology. The three main components of the Isidorian etymology are derived – not surprisingly – from the three main disciplines of antique education and the future core of the medieval *trivium*, namely grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, to which Isidore devoted the first two books of the *Etymologiae*. Grammar had made use of etymology in its analysis of lexemes as well as in textual interpretation, while rhetoric and dialectic had employed etymology as an effective means of accuracy and effectiveness in forensic or philosophical contention. Typically, however, Isidore combines the grammatical and rhetorical scope of etymology with the philosophers' belief that the etymology of a given word is revealing of the ontological nature of the thing signified. In addition, Isidore inherits the Jewish exegetical tradition of applying the etymological research to the explanation of the names of biblical characters. Interestingly, in *De differentiis rerum*,¹³³ which can be considered as a sort of preliminary sketch for the *Etymologiae*,¹³⁴ Isidore uses the very term *origo* to refer to some of the highest Christian dogmas, such as the mutual relationship between the Father and the Son within the Trinity, or the origin of creation.¹³⁵ Thus the etymological research finds a further field of application in Christian theology and the very word *origo* seems to acquire a sacred connotation.¹³⁶

It is exactly in this syncretistic combination of alexandrine grammatical scholarship, philosophical learning, Jewish lore, and Christian exegesis that the originality of Isidore's conception of etymology lies. The supreme value that Isidore assigns to the category of etymology can also be taken to reflect the nostalgia for the purity of origins which was deeply rooted in classical antiquity and was eventually conflated with the Judaic and Christian view of a fallen and disgraced mankind.¹³⁷ In view of these different traditions, the etymological study of a given word is for Isidore not just a diachronic analysis of a lexeme, but also a metaphysical investigation of the signified object.

The four grammatical categories of *differentia*, *analogia*, *glossa*, and *etymologia* underlie the whole of Isidore's learning and literary production. They represent the main means to establish a *pura*

latinitas, that is that ‘linguistic and semantic precision [which Isidore saw] as the main support of orthodoxy in the Church’s debate with heretics and pagans as well as in the Church’s own internal debate on matters of interpretation and doctrine.’¹³⁸ In particular, these four categories represent the structural and ideological framework of the Isidorian ‘grammatical trip-tych,’¹³⁹ namely *De differentiis*,¹⁴⁰ the *Synonyma*,¹⁴¹ and the *Etymologiae*.¹⁴² In this respect a progression can be outlined in Isidore’s use of the four categories, from what was apparently his very first work, *De differentiis*,¹⁴³ which relies on the category of *differentia*, to his last one, *Etymologiae*, where the four categories are all employed under the aegis of an etymological perspective. The etymological investigation proceeds from the identification of the individual object, distinct from the others of the same species, to its comparison and/or association with others: that is to say, etymology implies and is interdependent with the categories of difference and analogy.¹⁴⁴ The *Synonyma* and, especially, *De differentiis* have been considered to be preparatory to the *Etymologiae*,¹⁴⁵ and, as far as the categories on which they hinge are mutually dependent, the *Synonyma* and *De differentiis* can be seen as complementary.¹⁴⁶

The *Synonyma* then represent an early stage in the Isidorian production, as their date of composition also attests.¹⁴⁷ However, though they may lack the maturity of the *Etymologiae* or the *Sententiae*, the *Synonyma* constitute an extremely intense, complex text which reveals the manifold drives and components of Isidore’s personality and culture, as well as attesting to a distinctive blend of spiritual content and stylistic research. The following chapter will therefore be devoted to an analysis of the sources, style, and themes of the *Synonyma*, before focusing on their transmission to the British Isles and on their vernacularization in Anglo-Saxon England in particular.

CHAPTER TWO

The *Synonyma*: Their Structure, Style, and Sources

The *Synonymorum de lamentatione animae peccatricis libri duo*¹ are attested with various titles,² including the Augustinian one of *Soliloquia*.³ The entry in Braulio's *Renotatio* reads *Synonymorum libri duo*,⁴ while Ildefonsus mentions a 'liber lamentationis, quem ipse Synonima uocitauit' [a book of lamentation that he (Isidore) himself called *Synonyma*].⁵ Isidore himself, in the epistle with which he sent his work to Braulio,⁶ speaks of it as the *Synonymarum* [sic] *libellus*, and in the second of the two prefaces with which the *Synonyma* are printed in PL, the so-called *Prologus alter*, Isidore refers to his alleged direct source, the *schedula*, as *Synonyma*.⁷ (Likewise, in the first preface, the *Prologus prior*, the following text is introduced with the title of *Synonyma*; but this prologue is spurious and has been attributed to Braulio.)⁸ The new critical edition of the Isidorian text has also adopted the title *Synonyma*,⁹ and I will therefore refer to it as such throughout my work.

Recently, two recensions of the *Synonyma* have been identified and designated with the Greek letters L and F. Apparently, Isidore developed two parallel versions from a 'primitive' text and eventually corrected the two versions separately, from which the two recensions stemmed.¹⁰ In particular, recension L originated from the first revised version sent to Braulio between 619 and 631, while recension Φ originated from a later revision carried out by Isidore on his personal copy of the 'primitive' text. Eventually, conflations between the two recensions started from as early as the eighth century and are very numerous.¹¹ It has also been suggested that two different titles may well be assigned to L and F, namely the more common one of *Synonyma* to the former and that of *Soliloquia* to the latter, and that the *Prologus prior* is connected with recension L, the *Prologus alter* with recension Φ.¹²

Content, Structure, and Date of Publication of the *Synonyma*

The *Synonyma* are divided into two books, one decidedly different from the other as to theme, tone, and sources employed.¹³ The first book consists of an effusive and pathetic lamentation expressed by the sinful man overwhelmed by guilt and despairing of redemption. This *lamentum* develops in four stages, progressing from tearful desperation to a hopeful return to God. The first part consists of a monologue in which Man complains about his misery and his being unjustly persecuted (I, 5–21); secondly, Reason explains that this sorrow will prove beneficial, as it has been inflicted on Man to help him amend himself (I, 22–37). Then a dialogue takes place between Reason and Man, as a result of which Man is diverted from his sinful habits by both the fear of eternal punishment and the hope of God's mercy (I, 38–56). There follows a monologue by the former sinner where he, in tears again, expresses his compunction and his desire to return to God (I, 57–74); Reason, in turn, grants forgiveness for Man's sins, urging him not to lapse into temptation again (I, 75–7).

In the second book, the tone changes rather abruptly, becoming assertive and gnomic. Here Reason draws a very detailed *norma uiuendi* for the penitent, consisting of pragmatic prescriptions and precepts to pursue a virtuous lifestyle and resist temptations. Again, this meticulous moral code revolves around four main themes. First comes the attainment of four virtues, namely chastity, humility, patience, and charity (II, 5–41). A series of precepts about words and acts follows: in particular the proper and God-fearing use of words is recommended as well as a devout and active lifestyle; also the value of education and scholarship is highly praised (II, 42–66). Thirdly, the tasks and duties of some professional categories, such as scholars, judges, and dignitaries, are listed,¹⁴ and the hierarchical relationship between superiors and dependants is briefly examined (II, 67–77). After some general exhortations to moderation and honesty, the transitory nature of this world is emphasized; because of this, one must detach oneself from the love of anything earthly and instead give any possessions to charity (II, 78–99). In conclusion, there follows a final admonition by Reason to keep to the precepts she has put forth,

and Man thanks her for her precious teachings and sings her praises (II, 100–3).¹⁵

In the *Prologus alter*, Man and Reason are introduced as *personae duorum*, as mutual interlocutors in an inner dialogue.¹⁶ This circumstance immediately recalls a prestigious antecedent, that of Augustine's *Soliloquia*, the title of which was also given to Isidore's *Synonyma*.¹⁷ It could be inferred that Isidore knew the *Soliloquia*, not just because of his familiarity with Augustine's works,¹⁸ but also because in his *Etymologiae* he quotes the word *soliloquium*, a neologism coined by the bishop of Hippo, to explain the meaning of the Greek word *peusis*.¹⁹ Nevertheless, as Fontaine has argued, there is really no sound basis for associating the two texts, as their style and inspiration are substantially different. In the *Soliloquia*, Augustine undertakes intellectual research on God, but the text's tight intellectual argumentation, as well as its psychological and spiritual intensity, find no counterpart in Isidore's *Synonyma*. Beyond the analogies traditionally drawn between the two works, the *Synonyma* are in fact one of the Isidorian works which echo Augustine more superficially.²⁰ Also, Augustine's work has a truly dialectical structure, whereas in the *Synonyma* the dialogue between Reason and Man is largely implicit, insofar as the Isidorian text is ultimately made up of monologues. This is especially the case with the second book, which consists of a long gnomic and hortatory blueprint for everyday life by Reason.²¹ On the other hand, such a moral guideline can be understood as an answer to Man's lamentation and despair in Book I. The Anglo-Saxon witnesses of the *Synonyma* generally highlight the dialogical structure of the Isidorian text by means of rubrics or marginal notations, so that when reading the *Synonyma* from one of these manuscripts one can clearly appreciate the alternation of *Homo* and *Ratio* as the *personae duorum* indicated by Isidore in his prologue – an alternation which is now largely obliterated in the PL printed version.²²

Antecedents of the largely implicit dialogue in the *Synonyma*, more cogent than Augustine's *Soliloquia*, can instead be found in the Psalms, many of which show the same development from compunction to spiritual regeneration, from humble contrition to renewed confidence, as the *Synonyma*.²³ Indeed, Fontaine has defined the *Synonyma* as 'a sort of new penitential psalm,'²⁴ and,

as we shall see, the Psalms, in particular, but also the sapiential and prophetic books of the Old Testament in general, are fundamental sources of the *Synonyma*.²⁵

The new editor of the *Synonyma* has questioned the traditional dating by Aldama assigning this text to the years 610–12,²⁶ and has instead suggested a wider time span, 604–17.²⁷ In particular, given the key role of Gregory's *Moralia* as a source of the *Synonyma*, the *terminus post quem* is surely 595, when the *Moralia* were dedicated to Leander.²⁸ That the *Synonyma* were composed by a very young Isidore may be inferred from the reluctance with which the bishop agrees to send his work to Braulio after insistent requests on the part of his disciple,²⁹ although such reluctance may also be explained as a concession to a modesty topos. The composition of the *Synonyma* followed very closely that of *De differentiis uerborum* and *De differentiis rerum*. These three works seem to share a still somewhat elementary, scholastic character, and try to provide some rudiments of Christian spirituality and theology by means of three complementary grammatical categories, namely *differentia*, on the one hand, and *analogia* and *glossa*, on the other.³⁰ Probably it is this elementary and introductory character of the *Synonyma* that accounts for the scanty presence in them of echoes from authors of great psychological and spiritual depth like Augustine, and for the simplified reading given of Gregory's *Moralia*.³¹ Later on in the *Sententiae*,³² Isidore would give a different, deeper reading of the same source, and the same inspiration as that of the *Synonyma* would be brought to a higher level.³³ In the *Sententiae*, Isidore's spirituality seems to have reached its full maturity and to have acquired a definitely Christian profile, removing the antique flavour so evident in the *Synonyma*.³⁴ Therefore the *Synonyma* and the *Sententiae* allow us to follow the evolution of Isidore's religious sensibility.³⁵ In particular, the different use they make of Gregory's *Moralia* is an important piece of evidence for this evolution,³⁶ insofar as, after the juvenile interpretation of the *Moralia* given in the *Synonyma*, Gregory's text seems to have been more deeply understood and assimilated by Isidore in the *Sententiae*.

The spiritual dimension of the *Synonyma* has only recently been acknowledged in Isidorian studies, as they have traditionally been

classified as a grammatical work,³⁷ and, in the last edition of *Clavis patrum latinorum*, as a dogmatic one.³⁸ In the last century, however, a few scholars have insisted on the spiritual content of the *Synonyma*: Pérez de Urbel has enthusiastically underlined their mystical character,³⁹ and Madoz was the first to include the *Synonyma* among the ascetic works of Isidore, a group that consisted only of the latter text and the *Regula monachorum*.⁴⁰ This definition of the *Synonyma* as an ascetic work has been only partly accepted by Fontaine as the 'least inadequate.'⁴¹ (Indeed just one truly mystical passage can be singled out in the text, namely *Synonyma* II, 33, where the virtue of patience is defined as an imitation of Christ's passion.)⁴² However, Fontaine has, on the whole, pointed out the difficulties of any attempt to classify the *Synonyma*, since they are apparently so untypical and unrepresentative of Isidore's production, where he generally presents himself as a scholar and a shepherd, a pragmatic cultural and moral leader not really inclined to ascetic meditation or mystical effusion.⁴³

The Sources of the *Synonyma*⁴⁴

The *Synonyma* combine a variety of sources and thus attest to the complexity and diversity of Isidore's culture. In general, it can be said that the very core of the inspiration as well as of the style of the *Synonyma* can be traced back to the Bible, especially the sapiential books – chiefly Job and the Psalms⁴⁵ – and the prophetic books – principally Jeremiah and his lamentations – mediated through Gregory's *Moralia in Iob*.

The first book can be considered a biblical cento, drawing on both the Old Testament and, although only in a very limited proportion, the New Testament. Indeed Isidore seems to conflate Job and Jeremiah, insofar as it is through Job, the archetype of the righteous man unjustly persecuted, that Isidore applies the collective penitential lament of Jeremiah over the destruction of Jerusalem to the personal despair of an individual.⁴⁶ In turn, the Book of Job is read and interpreted in the light of the commentary on it that Gregory the Great had composed and dedicated to Leander.⁴⁷ The very idea of a *lamentum paenitentiae* seems to be borrowed from the Book of Job through Gregory's *Moralia*, where

this phrase occurs no fewer than sixteen times.⁴⁸ The same could be said for the ‘dialogic’ structure of the *Synonyma*, since Job’s *lamentum* often takes the form of an inner dialogue between Job and his soul and is interpreted as such by Gregory in his commentary. Also, it seems as if Gregory had already sketched out for Isidore the general development of both Book I and Book II of his *Synonyma*.⁴⁹

On the whole, however, the dependence of the *Synonyma* on Gregory’s *Moralia* is heavier in the second book, where Isidore has adapted or literally copied extracts from his source,⁵⁰ while in the first book the biblical inspiration is much stronger. Moreover, as we shall see, the *Moralia* also proved a stylistic source, since they already present the major traits of the synonymical style: that is, a rhythmical prose broken into short, isosyllabic *commata*,⁵¹ and marked by the frequent use of synonyms, anaphora, and assonance.⁵²

After Gregory the Great, the major patristic authority in the *Synonyma* is Cyprian, who exerts a double role as a mediator of the antique ethics and a model of style. Cyprian had been one of the first Christian moralists, heavily influenced by Latin Stoicism, and he is one of the major sources for the Stoic ‘colouring’ so evident particularly in the second book of the *Synonyma*.⁵³ On the other hand, Cyprian also seems to be the source for the only truly Christian and mystical passage of the whole work, namely *Synonyma* II, 33,⁵⁴ where Christ’s martyrdom on the Cross is celebrated as the highest example of the virtue of patience.

Cyprian also exerted a manifold influence on the style of the *Synonyma*. He was the earliest Christian author to make an extensive use of a prose arranged *per cola et commata*, not unlike the *Synonyma*.⁵⁵ Isidore’s admiration for Cyprian’s style is explicitly declared in the *Versus in bibliotheca*, where Cyprian is said to be ‘clarior eloquio cunctis’ [more illustrious than all the others for (his) eloquence].⁵⁶ In particular, the style of the *Synonyma* betrays some indebtedness to Cyprian’s pamphlet *Ad Donatum*.⁵⁷ The two texts seem to share a common inspiration and theme, since the *Ad Donatum* is basically an account of Cyprian’s conversion and has indeed been considered as the earliest example of the genre of autobiographical *confessio* in Christian Latin literature.⁵⁸ In particular, two textual parallels between the

Synonyma and Cyprian's text can be pointed out. Firstly, the *Ad Donatum* opens with a list of all the scandals and miseries of this life, which in turn inspired the introductory passage of *Synonyma* I, 1–13,⁵⁹ where the scandals of human justice, the dread of torture, and the shame of false testimonies are denounced in the violent terms of the antique diatribe.⁶⁰ The same 'diatribic' tone is clearly detectable in *Synonyma* II, 90, where the calamities impending on the rich and powerful are described in a passage again echoing Cyprian's pamphlet.⁶¹ It is noteworthy that, although Cyprian's style is sober and moderate in comparison with that of other third-century African authors, such as Tertullian, his *Ad Donatum* displays that kind of synonymical, rhythmical prose that will later develop into a major feature of the style of the *Synonyma*. Therefore this pamphlet may be considered to be a link between third-century African mannerism – though in its moderate version represented by Cyprian – and Isidore's synonymical style.⁶² In sum, Cyprian's influence on the *Synonyma* exerted itself on different levels. On the one hand, he acted as a mediator between Latin Stoicism and Christian ethics, between antique diatribe and the penitential lament. On the other, his style, with its moderate yet modernistic traits, set itself as a model to be imitated.

On the whole, however, the *Synonyma* can best be understood as a work profoundly indebted to and modelled on the Old Testament.⁶³ In total, out of twenty-nine explicit quotations from the Scriptures that I have counted, eleven are from the New Testament (basically the Gospels and the Epistles), while eighteen are from the Old Testament. Of these, fifteen are from the sapiential books (six from Job, five from the Psalms, two from the Book of Wisdom, and two from Ecclesiastes); while two are from the prophetic books (one from Proverbs and one from Lamentations).⁶⁴ In particular the tone of the Old Testament dominates absolutely in the sombre compunction of the first book. Far from being a loving father, whose mercy inspires hope and confidence, God is portrayed as an awe-inspiring judge, constantly threatening eternal punishment, while Christ is almost absent, being mentioned just once in Book I and three times in Book II.⁶⁵ Pervasive as the influence of the *Moralia* on the *Synonyma* may be, Gregory's 'open' spirituality is reduced to its harshest elements – the ones most related to the Old Testament – and his warm emphasis on charity and devotion is ruled out.⁶⁶

Moreover, the influence of the Bible's sapiential books combines with that of antique ethics.⁶⁷ In particular, Fontaine has noted some textual parallels between the *Synonyma* and two collections of *sententiae*, both very widespread in the Middle Ages – namely the *Disticha Catonis* and the *Sententiae Sexti*. These parallels, although not numerous, are significant, as they concern some key concepts dealt with in the *Synonyma*, especially in Book II, such as those of *prudentia* and *remedia fortuitorum*. In sum, in view of the debt to both biblical and pagan wisdom tradition, the *Synonyma* can be more appropriately described as a sort of 'Christian sapiential collection' rather than a grammatical, ascetic, or mystical text.⁶⁸

However, it might be good to pursue the investigation of the diverse sources and influences detectable in the *Synonyma* from the very text which Isidore explicitly introduces as the origin of his inspiration, namely the *schedula*.

The Schedula

In the *Prologus alter*,⁶⁹ Isidore tells the reader that the composition of his *libellus* was inspired by a '*schedula quam Synonyma dicunt*' [a *schedula* that they call *Synonyma*].⁷⁰ In a number of manuscripts, the word *schedula* is followed by the genitive *Ciceronis*,⁷¹ which Arévalo expunged in his edition.⁷² Scholars have not yet reached agreement as to the identification of this *schedula*, but some have argued that it is the spurious *Synonyma Ciceronis*. Numerous collections of synonyms have been transmitted under this title.⁷³ Generally speaking, they originated in late antiquity or in the early Middle Ages, and are known from the first doublet of synonyms opening the collection.⁷⁴ Their attribution to Cicero is probably due to the prestige enjoyed by Cicero as a rhetorician as well as to the important role of the synonymical paraphrase in the antique schools of rhetoric. In addition, Cicero's authorship was further motivated by a spurious letter, *Cicero ad Veterium* (or *Veturium*), which was prefaced to some of these collections in the early Middle Ages.⁷⁵ The Ciceronian authorship of the *schedula* was long ago defended by Baiter, according to whom the *schedula* used as a source by Isidore was in fact the lost *Consolatio* written by Cicero on the death of his

daughter Tullia.⁷⁶ In this defence Baiter has remained isolated and the *Synonyma Ciceronis* have been agreed to be spurious; but his hypothesis is nevertheless interesting in view of the importance that the *Synonyma* had as a source within the genre of *consolatio* or *Trostbuch*.⁷⁷ Among those who have discarded the Ciceronian authorship, it may be worthwhile to mention Brugnoli, who has argued instead that the so-called *Synonyma Ciceronis* are a pamphlet composed in early medieval Ireland.⁷⁸ Were this to be the case, the *Synonyma Ciceronis* would add to the view that the synonymical style was particularly popular in medieval Ireland and congenial to the medieval Irish rhetorical taste.⁷⁹ Without excluding the possibility that, by naming the *schedula* as his alleged source, Isidore is making a concession to a literary topos, the association established between the *Synonyma Ciceronis* and Isidore's *Synonyma* is very much to the point. Indeed, one could see in the Isidorian text an accomplished endeavour made by Isidore in the wake of compilations which must have enjoyed a vast diffusion and popularity in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.⁸⁰ Be that as it may, the *schedula* must have been a scholastic pamphlet of grammatical content,⁸¹ and its *formula*, that is its peculiar synonymical style, inspired Isidore when he was writing his *libellus*. However, as Isidore himself makes clear in the *Prologus alter*, the core of his inspiration does not lie in *eius operis eloquium* [the eloquence of that work], but in his own *uotum* [prayer].⁸² Therefore, according to Isidore's own statement, his *Synonyma* originated from the meeting of a particular style – the synonymical one – and an inner urge to pray and to find comfort in prayer in a time of troubles.

Eloquium and Uotum

A central question, therefore, is that of establishing the mutual ratio of *eloquium* and *uotum* in the whole work, in order to gain a better insight into its character. As to the *eloquium*, the *Synonyma* have traditionally been considered as the best instance of the *stilus ysydorianus*. A good starting point to get acquainted with the idiosyncratic features of this style is provided by John of Garland, a scholar and Latinist of the thirteenth century, in his treatise *Parisiانا poetria*.⁸³ According to his description, the *stilus ysydorianus* is made up of 'clausulae similem habentes finem

secundum leoninitatem et consonanciam; et uidentur esse clausulae pares in sillabis, quamuis non sint. Item iste stilus ualde motiuus est ad pietatem uel ad leticiam' [*clausulae* with similar endings – that is, rhyming in the manner of leonines; and the *clausulae* seem to be equal in syllables, though in fact they may not be. This style has great power to stir piety or joy].⁸⁴ It may be noted in passing that the work quoted as representative of this style is not Isidore's *Synonyma*, but Augustine's *Soliloquia*, which can be explained by the frequent association between the two texts in the Middle Ages.⁸⁵

In sum, the *stilus ysydorianus* is a style where synonyms and homoeoteleuta are systematically employed and where sentences are broken into short *cola et commata*.⁸⁶ These *commata* are in turn often isosyllabic and juxtaposed asyndetically, but linked by sound effects such as assonance and rhyme. An example of the balanced symmetry of the synonymous *commata* can be found in *Synonyma* I, 5, where three phrases share a perfectly parallel syntax:

euadendae calamitatis indicia non comprehendo,
minuendi doloris argumenta non colligo, effugiendi
funeris uestigia non inuenio[.]

[I do not understand the hints to eschew (my)
misfortune, I do not gather the arguments to lessen (my)
pain, I do not find the vestiges to escape death.]

As is evident from the example above, sets of short *commata* follow each other asyndetically and generally share a parallel structure. Parallelism is, in turn, emphasized by the frequent use of anaphora, epistrophe, rhyme, and assonance, as can be seen in the following passages from the beginning of *Synonyma* II:

Quaeso te, anima, obsecro te, deprecor te, imploro te, ne
quid ultra leuiter agas, ne quid inconsulte geras, ne
temere aliud facias[;] (*Synonyma* II, 1)

[I ask you, soul, I beseech you, I entreat you, I implore
you, that you shall no further do anything lightly, that
you shall not do anything unreasonable, that you shall
not do anything rash];

Serua rectam fidem, tene sinceram fidem, custodi
intemeratam fidem[.] (*Synonyma* II, 3)

[Keep the right faith, hold sincere faith, cherish pure
faith.]

Both passages are made up of short *commata*, which in turn tend to be largely isosyllabic and linked asyndetically. The former comprises two sequences of *commata*: in the first series, the *commata* are linked by the epistrophe of *te* and therefore rhyme with each other, while the other sequence is characterized by the anaphora of *ne* and rhyme in *-as*. The second *colon* consists of three *commata*, which all share a strictly parallel structure and are linked by the epistrophe of *fidem* and by the homoeoteleuton in *-am* of the middle element of each *comma*.

The only exception to these long and rather monotonous sequences is often their last *comma*, which tends to be longer than the others and not to rhyme with them, making up what is known as *tricolon abundans*.⁸⁷ An example of this can be found in *Synonyma* I, 24:

Omni ope, omni ui, omni ingenio, omni uirtute, omni
arte, omni ratione, omni consilio, omni instantia sume
luctamen contra corporales molestias[.]

[With every deed, with every strength, with every wit,
with every virtue, with every device, with every
argument, with every resolution, with every vehemence,
take up the fight against bodily nuisances.]

Also, the sequence of *commata* linked by rhyme and assonance can be interrupted by an unrhymed element, as within *Synonyma* I, 5:

Circumdatus sum omnibus malis, circumseptus aerumnis,
circumclusus aduersis, obsitus miseriis, opertus
infelicitate, oppressus angustiis[.]

[I am surrounded by all evils, encircled by afflictions,
enclosed by adversities, filled with miseries, covered with
unhappiness, oppressed by anxieties.]

Here the *comma opertus infelicitate* clearly breaks the string of *commata* all ending in -is.⁸⁸

Often the asyndetical coordination of the *commata* and their parallel syntax are functional to antithesis, another rhetorical device characteristic of the synonymical prose where synonyms and antonyms artfully alternate. One can consider the following instances of antithetical *commata* from *Synonyma* I, 8 and 9:

iniqui salui fiunt, innocentes pereunt, boni indigent,
improbi abundant, scelerati potentes sunt ... Iusti egent,
iniqui honorantur, iusti despiciuntur, iniqui laetantur,
iusti in moerore et luctu sunt.

[the unrighteous are saved, the innocents die, the good are in need, the dishonest are wealthy, the wicked are powerful. The righteous are destitute, the unrighteous are honoured, the righteous are despised, the unrighteous rejoice, the righteous are in sadness and mourning.]

Elsewhere, slight deviations from parallel syntax are introduced and, together with the synonymical variations, they contribute to modulate the prose of the *Synonyma*. An instance of this can be found within *Synonyma* I, 5:

non reperio uspiam tanti mali perfugium, tanti doloris
non inuenio argumentum[.]

[I nowhere find shelter from such a great misfortune, I do not find the argument of such a great pain.]

It may be noted in passing that such a sophisticated interaction of variation and repetition must have both appealed and sounded familiar to the Anglo-Saxons, since a similar device is one of the most distinctive and pervasive features of Old English poetry.⁸⁹

Figures of repetition, especially anaphora, epistrophe, and polyptoton, as well as figures of sound, particularly rhyme, assonance, and homoeoteleuton, closely interact to create the characteristic tautological style of the *Synonyma*, and often these features coincide, given that the pairs of rhyming words are

actually two repeated occurrences of the same word in successive *commata*. This happens very frequently in those strings of *commata* finishing in *est*,⁹⁰ such as we find in *Synonyma* I, 10:

Nihil exploratum est, nihil patefactum est, nihil
inuestigatum est, nihil repertum est[.]

[Nothing has been inquired, nothing has been revealed,
nothing has been investigated, nothing has been found
out.]

Aural effects and repetitions naturally emphasize the patterned syntax of the synonymical prose and grant it a distinctive rhythm which brings it close to verse. One can consider the following extracts:

Nullus mihi protectionem praebet, nullus defensionem
adhibet, nullus adminiculum tribuit, nullus malis meis
succurrit [;] (*Synonyma* I, 7)

[Nobody offers me protection, nobody exercises defence,
nobody gives support, nobody assists (me) against my
misfortunes;]

Cui dicam? cui credam? cui loquar? quem adeam? a quo
consilium petam? in quo animum meum ponam? quem
potissimum quaeram? (*Synonyma* I, 11)

[Whom should I speak to? Whom should I believe in?
Whom should I talk to? Whom should I approach? Whose
advice should I ask for? To whom should I entrust my
soul? Which prominent person should I seek?]

O homo, discute conscientiam tuam, intende mentem
tuam, examina te, loquatur tibi cor tuum, considera
meritum tuum; iuste argueris, iuste flagellaris, iusto
iudicio iudicaris[.] (*Synonyma* I, 34)

[O Man, investigate your conscience, understand your
mind, examine yourself, let your heart speak to you,

consider your merit(s); rightly you are accused, rightly you are scourged, you are judged according to a right judgment.]

This kind of rhymed, rhythmical prose – a sort of compromise between prose and poetry – was to become one of the great models of *Kunstprosa* in the Middle Ages.⁹¹ In fact, the *stilus ysydorianus*, with its peculiar features, is not unique to the *Synonyma*, but can be found elsewhere in Isidore's production. In the *Liber de ortu et obitu patrum* and in the *Laus Spaniae*,⁹² for example, the eulogy of the biblical heroes and of Isidore's homeland, respectively, betrays the influence of the *stilus ysydorianus* in the long lists of parallel groups of adjectives and appositions. In turn, as we shall see, this feature can be traced back to the liturgical style.⁹³ Nor is the *stilus ysydorianus* unique to Isidore: the literature of Visigothic Spain provides other examples of such a style in the works by Ildefonsus of Toledo and, especially, King Sisebut.⁹⁴ Indeed, compared to the excesses of Sisebut's mannerism, to his immoderate use of rare and obscure vocabulary, prolonged metaphors, and turgid syntax,⁹⁵ the style of the *Synonyma* appears rather moderate and almost of a classical measure. Concision and restraint of verbosity are explicitly praised within the *norma uiuendi* – even if in a rather wordy sequence of synonyms (*Synonyma* II, 49) – a position linked to the tradition of the sapiential books of the Old Testament which held *breuitas* as a characteristic of the sage, as opposed to the *multiloquium* characteristic of the fool. On the other hand, this praise of *breuitas* could be traced back to classical principles, in particular to that severe classicism that Isidore endorses in the second book of the *Etymologiae* dedicated to rhetoric.⁹⁶ Here Isidore draws a strict, technical handbook of style looking back to the scholastic tradition of Cicero and Quintilian, by far Isidore's two most admired rhetoricians.⁹⁷ This conservative, normative attitude of Isidore as a theorist often appears at odds with his actual practice of style. In this regard the loss of Isidore's rhetorical works is most regrettable, because, according to the comments of his contemporaries Braulio, Ildefonsus, and Fructuosus of Braga, Isidore's oratory was grandiloquent and certainly very distant from the rigour of his theoretical principles.⁹⁸ The *Synonyma* are, therefore, the best surviving witness to what has been defined as the duality of Isidore's

aesthetics,⁹⁹ that is his oscillating between two antagonistic tendencies: one towards a classical measure as well as a succinct, strictly didactic style, and the other towards a decorative, rhetorical one.¹⁰⁰ Not only the content of the *Synonyma*,¹⁰¹ then, but also their style has an intrinsic dialectic character and contributes an insight into the different drives and varied background of Isidore's culture and personality.

On the one hand, the synonymical variation and paraphrase, which are the most striking feature of this work, seem to be a sort of late version of the classical *interpretatio* recommended by Quintilian to would-be orators wishing to improve their fluency and to widen their vocabulary or *copia uerborum*.¹⁰² Indeed the predilection for strings of synonyms expressing the same thing could be traced as far back as Attic rhetoricians, in particular Demosthenes, as a means towards *deinóthv*, the rhetorical forcefulness and intensity of speech.¹⁰³

On the other hand, another antecedent – even more ancient than the classical one – of the synonymical style could be found in the Hebrew verse of the Semitic genre of lamentation as represented in the sapiential books of the Bible, especially the Psalms and the book of Job, and in the book of the prophet Jeremiah.¹⁰⁴ As has already been pointed out, these biblical sources played a major role in the inspiration of the *Synonyma*.¹⁰⁵ It is therefore reasonable to suppose that Isidore might have tried to reproduce in his Latin prose their rhythm and expression, as well as one of the most important devices of this poetry, namely the synonymical parallelism. Also, biblical exegesis may well have contributed to the definition of the *stilus ysydorianus*: the practice of *ruminatio* on the Holy Writ and exegetical glossing naturally resulted in synonymical parallelism.¹⁰⁶ Isidore himself was an exegete,¹⁰⁷ and, as a result, he must have been very familiar with the long exegetical tradition that went back to Jerome and still largely followed the methods practised and taught in the antique schools of rhetoric. The kind of paraphrase enforced by this tradition was in fact a sumptuous one, close to the ostentatious features of the synonymical style.

The biblical influence on the *stilus ysydorianus* could also have been mediated by the contemporary Gallican liturgy, the style of which was 'ostentatiously literary.'¹⁰⁸ In particular, the long

patterned strings of epithets within litanies represent a perfect example of synonymical variation,¹⁰⁹ and the *stilus ysydorianus* will often be employed in medieval prayers.¹¹⁰ Isidore himself played an important role as a canonist and reformer of the Spanish liturgy,¹¹¹ as well as tracing the history of it in his *De ecclesiasticis officiis*.¹¹² Furthermore, he might even have composed some sacred music,¹¹³ and the latter too could have exerted an influence on the *stilus ysydorianus*, because the sacred vocal music in the early medieval Spanish church was often over-abundant and over-ornamented. An example of this is that particular style of sacred vocal music called ‘melismatic,’ which included interminable melodies, sometimes of three hundred notes or more.¹¹⁴

Isidore’s appreciation of music could also well account for the fondness for aural effects he shows in the *Synonyma*,¹¹⁵ where anaphora and homoeoteleuton, assonance and rhyme abound.¹¹⁶ Indeed, in spite of the austerity of the precepts given in the second book of the *Etymologiae*,¹¹⁷ and in spite of the stylistic monotony and ‘telegraphic’ nature of most of Isidore’s prose,¹¹⁸ where he often provides just brief entries and succinct definitions, Isidore does not object to the values of *delectatio*. As a theorist in the *Etymologiae*,¹¹⁹ and as a literary critic in *De uiris illustribus* and the *Versus in bibliotheca*, Isidore discusses at length and praises stylistic features which are essentially decorative and ornamental, such as, especially, a sumptuous vocabulary.¹²⁰ In practice, however, Isidore does not succeed in equalling the achievements of his most admired authors and, in the end, generally concedes very little to *delectatio*. Perhaps because he lacks an authentic rhetorical education and his perspective is, instead, essentially grammatical,¹²¹ Isidore reduces the *uariatio sermonis* to the mere lexical level, that is, to synonymical variation. Also, his constant preoccupation with the didactic effectiveness of his works contributes to the overall sobriety and dryness of his style,¹²² insofar as the decorative aspects are sacrificed to the rigorous and systematic compilation and classification of all sorts of data by means of the four grammatical categories.¹²³

On the other hand, the rhythmical prose of the *Synonyma* itself serves a pedagogic aim, since aural effects such as assonance, homoeoteleuton, and rhyme represent an effective support to memory. These mnemonic devices were most likely mediated to

Isidore by the Hebrew verse of the Bible, as well as by the third-century African authors very popular in seventh-century Spain,¹²⁴ such as Tertullian and Cyprian, with their modernistic style following the teaching of the second sophistic.¹²⁵ Augustine himself, one of the authors most admired by Isidore, also made use of parallelism and rhyme with a mnemonic and didactic function.¹²⁶ The mnemonic advantages that the synonymical style offered to a rhetorical and spiritual primer such as the *Synonyma*,¹²⁷ therefore, must not be underestimated. Indeed the success enjoyed by this style in Spain at the beginning of the seventh century has been related by Fontaine to the paucity of manuscripts from that time and place, as though memory were then the safest means of preservation of literary production.¹²⁸

The synonymical style, therefore, is the result of the meeting of several influences and models. The stylistic research underlying the work seems to justify its traditional classification as a grammatical one.¹²⁹ Indeed, in the wake of what has been suggested with regard to the content of the *Synonyma*, their style could also be defined as ‘ascetic,’ insofar as it results from contrasting tendencies and drives in Isidore’s culture and taste. The synonymical style can be said to represent a compromise between, on the one hand, the severe classicism of the precepts of the second book of the *Etymologiae*, and, on the other, the excesses and degeneration of late antique Latin prose, as represented in Visigothic Spain especially by Sisebut’s flamboyant style.¹³⁰ This search for a balanced, moderate solution is not just pursued by Isidore in the stylistic domain, but can be considered a congenital trait of his personality, and as such is detectable throughout his literary production, where Isidore seems to avoid any extremist position and to aim at a *christiana mediocritas*.¹³¹ This ideal of balance and moderation is, however, always striven for and never quite achieved, insofar as Isidore’s personality is fundamentally a dialectical one: he appears to be constantly torn between his contemplative vocation as a monk and his pastoral duties as a bishop, between his role as last heir of the Hispano-Roman tradition and that of poet of the new Visigothic Spain, and, finally, between the classical ideals of his aesthetics and the already medieval traits of his sensibility.¹³² In this regard the *Synonyma*, with their lyrical effusiveness and peculiar style, can be considered to be one of the earliest literary attestations of the Middle Ages.¹³³

At the same time, the variety of sources and influences detectable in this text, as well as the intrinsically dialectic nature of its content and style, make it a primary witness to Isidore's multifaceted culture and personality.

As to the *uotum*, that is, the lyrical and devotional elements of personal effusion in the *Synonyma*,¹³⁴ it has often been neglected in the overall assessment of this text by modern readers.¹³⁵ Indeed, as has already been pointed out, 'ascetic' is the 'least inadequate' definition so far given of the *Synonyma*.¹³⁶ This is especially true for the *lamentum* of the first book, which has been described as 'a veritable lyrical mime' of the penitent soul.¹³⁷ Such a mystical dimension is also corroborated by the success enjoyed by the *Synonyma* as a contemplative text throughout the Middle Ages, especially in monastic circles.¹³⁸ In sum, the *Synonyma* are not only of capital importance for the understanding of Isidore's own spirituality, but they can also be considered to be a classic of the spirituality of the Western Middle Ages in general.¹³⁹

That having been said, the mystical and ascetic content of the *Synonyma* should not be overrated. Isidore never equalled Gregory's mystical depth, as he constantly tends to reduce mysticism to ethics, feeling himself more at ease when dealing with moral or disciplinary topics.¹⁴⁰ Often the contrition of the sinful soul in the first book appears to be simply fear of eternal damnation rather than deep spiritual awareness of the misery of a sinful life and disdain for it. Also, the precepts given in the second book sound rather basic and certainly more moral and pragmatic than ascetic. Indeed, this moral code is often deeply imbued with the ethics of Roman Stoicism, rather than inspired by purely Christian values. So one is left to wonder whether the conversion experienced by the sinful man is to the Christian God or to Stoic Reason, as it is under the guidance of Reason (and Will) that this conversion seems to be accomplished.¹⁴¹ As a matter of fact, Book II opens with the Socratic motto 'Scito, homo, temetipsum' [man, know yourself] (*Synonyma* II, 2), and concludes with a very precise echo of the famous praise of philosophy contained in the *Tusculanae disputationes* by Cicero (*Synonyma* II, 102–3).¹⁴² The text of the *Synonyma* is interspersed with variations on the themes of the evenness and firmness of the soul, courage against mishaps, and the comfort given by the awareness of the fleetingness of this

life's trials, which all belong to the *κοινὴ* of Roman moral philosophy. Equally, meditation on death or on *remedia fortuitorum* occurs quite often, and again betrays Stoic antecedents. *Synonyma* I, 48, for example, seems to summarize the main contents of Seneca's *Epistolae ad Lucilium*. The same could be said of *Synonyma* II, 28–9, where, again according to Senecan principles, the ability to foresee any risks is recommended as typical of the sage. All these reminiscences confer on the Isidorian text an 'antique colouring',¹⁴³ and even the vocabulary consistently echoes that of the antique philosophical schools.

However, the tradition that supported this vocabulary was long and prestigious and, consequently, its use was often more spontaneous and inertial than deliberate, especially in an author so imbued with inherited antique values and culture as Isidore. Also, when Isidore compiled his works, Latin Christianity had already been borrowing its vocabulary and partly also the inspiration of its practical ethics from Stoicism for centuries. Consequently, when dealing with these reminiscences of antique philosophy, one should take into account the role of possible Christian intermediaries between Isidore and his ultimate antique sources. So, for example, the praise of Reason which concludes the *Synonyma* and closely echoes Cicero's *Tusculanae* V, 2–6¹⁴⁴ was very probably read by Isidore in Lactantius's *Institutiones diuinae* III, xiii, 15.¹⁴⁵ Equally, the *sententiae* concerning the *remedia fortuitorum* in *Synonyma* II, 28–9 might be traced back not only to Stoic ethics, but to the sapiential books of the Bible or the Fathers of the church.¹⁴⁶ Likewise the knowledge of Seneca's works could have been mediated by a sixth-century Iberian bishop, Martin of Braga, with whose works Isidore seems to be quite familiar in his *De uiris illustribus*, xxii.¹⁴⁷ Here Isidore claims to have read a work by Martin now generally known as *Formula uitae honestae*, which is reckoned to be a compendium of a lost treatise by Seneca.¹⁴⁸ Also, it has been argued that such a Stoic imprint on Isidore's ethics owes much to Leander's personal influence.¹⁴⁹ Be that as it may, it can, however, be concluded that the biblical and patristic sources, principally Gregory the Great and Cyprian, provide a sort of Christian veil,¹⁵⁰ which covers the embarrassment probably caused to Isidore by the frequent echoes of pagan philosophy,¹⁵¹ and helps to bridge the gap between the two components of Isidore's inspiration, namely antique ethics and Christian

spirituality.

In sum, an awareness of the coexistence of *eloquium* and *uotum* is the most reliable guide to interpret a text like the *Synonyma*. Isidore's culture has fittingly been said to present the ambiguity of a Janus bust,¹⁵² being at the same time both antique and medieval, secular and Christian.¹⁵³ Isidore's works themselves show how he mixed the most diverse sources. On the other hand, the very possibility of this conflation and synthesis shows that Isidore is already at a distance not only from the classical world, but also from the late antique one, that is, from the age of Tertullian or even of his beloved Augustine. For these authors lived in an age when the antique world and its pagan culture did not yet represent such a distant past, and it was therefore necessary for the Christian church to define and assert its own cultural and doctrinal identity, often in polemic opposition to that world. In contrast, Isidore's lifespan was spent in seventh-century Spain, a strongly romanized country, which had been one of the first areas of the empire to suffer barbarian invasions, but also the first to find a new political and religious unity under the Visigothic monarchy.¹⁵⁴ These extremely favourable political conditions enabled her bishops and aristocracy to continue cultivating both sacred and secular letters, and to experience until the end of the seventh century a cultural renaissance in which Isidore played a leading role.¹⁵⁵ To him, both pagan and Christian antique authors have equally become venerable *auctoritates*. In this anachronistic way of reading writers of the past, Isidore is already a man of the Middle Ages, although at the same time he is acting as the chief custodian of antique letters.¹⁵⁶ Like his country and his age, he is divided between two worlds.¹⁵⁷ The *Synonyma* are probably the work of Isidore's which best signifies the diverse and often contradictory components and drives of his personality and culture. This is already evident in the different tone and content of the two books making up the work, where the sombre meditation on sin and human frailty on the part of the former monk is followed by the assertive and pragmatic precepts conceived by the bishop conscious of his duties as a moral and cultural leader. Likewise, there are two audiences for the *Synonyma*. As Isidore himself states in his *Prologus alter*, he wrote them 'mihi uel miseris' [for me or for the wretched ones].¹⁵⁸ Now, the elements of

personal meditation and lyrical effusion are immediately detectable. As to the other addressees, the *miseri*, they could at first sight seem to be just another riddle presented by the *Synonyma*. However, it has been convincingly argued that the *miseri* are the young clerics, possibly Isidore's immediate pupils in the episcopal school of Seville,¹⁵⁹ whom our bishop wished to provide both with an introductory handbook, a sort of primer or isagoge *ad uitam spiritalem*,¹⁶⁰ and with a useful grammatical exercise, that of the synonymical paraphrase, widely practised and recommended in the antique school of rhetoric.¹⁶¹ In those days, this kind of exercise had helped would-be orators to acquire *copia uerborum*; in seventh-century Spain, it would have improved the mnemonic and preaching skills of would-be priests. From this point of view the association between spiritual and moral inspiration on the one hand, and the synonymical style on the other, so bewildering at first, finds a satisfying explanation in Isidore's thorough didactic project, which constitutes his main concern and indeed his primary motivation as a writer.¹⁶² It is for the sake of his pedagogic aims that Isidore succeeds in unifying the diverse components of his culture and inspiration. Therefore, it is in the context of this didactic plan that we must search for the internal consistency and meaning of the *Synonyma*. It is not accidental that, despite Isidore's reservations about its publication, this work became a classic manual in the spiritual training of monks in the West.¹⁶³ In spite of its being so simple and 'schoolish,' even basic and fastidious in some of its moral precepts – or probably exactly because of it – this handbook obviously answered the religious demands of the seventh century as well as those of the later Middle Ages.¹⁶⁴

Epitomes of the *Synonyma*

The fortune of the *Synonyma* throughout the Middle Ages is attested not only by the considerable number of manuscript witnesses containing the Isidorian text in whole or in part.¹⁶⁵ Because of their thematic units, the *Synonyma* naturally lent themselves to being epitomized. Thus various excerpts were included in a number of *florilegia*¹⁶⁶ as well as canonical¹⁶⁷ and devotional collections,¹⁶⁸ and epitomes were confected by both

Isidore's contemporaries and later compilers.¹⁶⁹ These circumstances help to explain a distinctive trait of the *posterité* of the *Synonyma*, namely 'l'importance des emprunts indirects,' insofar as the later popularity of the Isidorian text was mostly ensured by the exceptional diffusion of single extracts, often as short as a few phrases.¹⁷⁰

To mention just one collection relying on the *Synonyma*, the Isidorian text was intensely drawn on in one of the most popular biblical and patristic *florilegia* of the early Middle Ages, the *Liber scintillarum*, written about 700 by Defensor of Ligugé.¹⁷¹ The *Synonyma* are Defensor's second favourite Isidorian text after the *Sententiae*, and one of his most frequently used source-texts in general.¹⁷² The popularity of the *Liber scintillarum* in Anglo-Saxon England is attested, among other evidence, by a manuscript witness, London, BL, Royal 7. C. iv,¹⁷³ featuring a continuous Old English interlinear gloss.¹⁷⁴

Two of the most widespread epitomes of the *Synonyma* are *De norma uiuendi*¹⁷⁵ and *De nouae uitae institutione*, also known as *Collectum beati Ysidori*.¹⁷⁶ Both texts are ultimately derived from the second book of the *Synonyma*,¹⁷⁷ and were likely composed by a Spanish author within a century of Isidore's death.¹⁷⁸

Often, however, epitomes and extracts of the *Synonyma* have a limited textual tradition and seem to be the products of a spontaneous selection by anonymous compilers, which have been luckily preserved in unique witnesses. For example, a famous palimpsest from St Gall dating to the end of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth contains in its upper script three epitomes of the *Synonyma*, entitled *De uita et morte hominum dicit*, *De honore huius saeculi dicit*, and *De iustis laboribus tuis dicit*.¹⁷⁹ A similar case concerns the *ubi sunt* passage of the *Synonyma* which makes up an Old English piece uniquely contained in the late Anglo-Saxon manuscript London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A. iii.¹⁸⁰

A later text heavily indebted to Book II of the *Synonyma* is the *Exhortatio ad contemptum temporalium et desiderium aeternorum*,¹⁸¹ which used to be attributed to Anselm of Canterbury († 1109), but which is now definitely considered spurious.¹⁸² An early thirteenth-century treatise of Christian ethics, the *Liber de modo bene uiuendi ad sororem*, draws on both books of the *Synonyma*.¹⁸³ It was composed in England by Thomas of Froidmont († c. 1225),

although it came to be associated with Bernard of Clairvaux and is today printed together with Bernard's authentic works.¹⁸⁴ Interestingly, this *Liber* is divided into chapters devoted to the discussion of particular vices or virtues, such as, for example, *De cupiditate*, *De uirginitate*, and the like, and in that it resembles the subdivisions inserted in the second book of the *Synonyma* in at least two Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, the fact that the *Liber* puts on a virtual dialogue between the author and his putative addressee, that is, his sister, also recalls the exchange between *Homo* and *Ratio* underlying the *Synonyma*.¹⁸⁶

The popularity of the *Synonyma* stretches very late into the Middle Ages and beyond. An epitome of the second book of the *Synonyma*, the *Monita de uerbis beati Ysidori*, was published around 1486 together with a popular *florilegium*, the *Speculum christiani*, in one of William de Machlinia's prints.¹⁸⁷ Like the *Liber de modo bene uiuendi*, the *Monita* are also divided into chapters, each devoted to a vice or a virtue.

One of the latest epitomes of the *Synonyma* of which we have knowledge is the *Speculum humanitatis siue modus recte uiuendi*,¹⁸⁸ which was likely known in England, although probably under a different title. The *Speculum humanitatis* 'has almost exactly the same incipit and explicit' as an epitome of the *Synonyma* contained in an English codex of the early fifteenth century, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 110, which Burrow designates as *Tractatus deflentis hominis et amonentis racionis*.¹⁸⁹ An earlier copy of this same epitome is contained in an early thirteenth-century manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 26, bearing the title of *Exempla sanctorum patrum*.¹⁹⁰ In turn, a copy of the *Tractatus* very close to but not identical with that in Bodley 110 was drawn on by Thomas Hoccleve for the first poem of his *Series*, the *Complaint*, very likely composed in 1420.¹⁹¹

Finally, Burrow also mentions yet another late epitome of the second book of the *Synonyma* called *Consilia Isidori*, the knowledge of which in medieval England is attested by ms. Cambridge, UL, Mm. 6. 17, and by a Middle English version of it bound with one of Hoccleve's holographs in ms. San Marino, CA, Henry E. Huntington Library, HM 744, fols. 4r-10v.¹⁹²

The British Isles were to prove one of the areas where the

Synonyma were most widespread. Both Ireland and England seem to have received the Isidorian text by the late seventh century and to have intensively drawn on it. My discussion will then move on to the transmission of the *Synonyma* to the British Isles and focus in particular on their manuscript tradition in Anglo-Saxon England.

CHAPTER THREE

Isidore and the *Synonyma* in the British Isles

The question of the transmission of Isidore's works from Visigothic Spain to the British Isles has engendered a long and animated scholarly debate, which has become polarized around two theories: first, the theory that the Isidorian texts reached the insular world by way of continental intermediaries, whether Merovingian France¹ or Irish foundations (primarily Bobbio); second, the theory of direct transmission from Spain. In both cases, the role of the Irish as the primary agents of transmission has proved one of the most controversial points at issue, as it involves the more general question of the level of early medieval Irish scholarship, as well as the function that Ireland – untouched by Roman colonization – had as a repository of antique letters. No small part in the controversy between 'Iromaniacs' and 'Irophobics'² in the 1950s has been played by Bischoff's historic study on early medieval Hiberno-Latin exegesis.³ This *querelle* has been rekindled in recent years by Gorman, who has radically contested Bischoff's methods and results, reaching the largely negative conclusion that 'the evidence for exegetical activity in [early medieval] Ireland is practically nonexistent [*sic*].'⁴ If a few points raised by Gorman have received some approval,⁵ many of his arguments, as well as his stern criticism of Bischoff's work and indeed of early medieval Irish scholarship as a whole, have been generally rejected.⁶

The following pages provide an outline of the knowledge and diffusion of Isidore's works in both Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England. In particular, the routes of transmission of two especially influential Isidorian texts, namely *De natura rerum* and the *Etymologiae*, will be discussed, and a summary of the earliest manuscript evidence of Isidore's works will be presented to assess the time and modes of their transmission to the British Isles.

Finally, the conclusion of the chapter will focus on the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma*.

Isidorian Scholarship in Early Medieval Ireland

A number of Isidore's texts were certainly known to the Irish at an early date, often within a few decades of first publication, triggering in Ireland a kind of 'revolution of knowledge' as early as the second half of the seventh century.⁷ This early success enjoyed by Isidore in Ireland is again indirect proof of the pedagogical impact of his works in an area untouched by Roman colonization, where Latin had to be learnt as a foreign language.⁸

Evidence shows that various Isidorian texts were drawn on by Hiberno-Latin writers from an early date. Laidcenn († 661 or c. 665),⁹ a monk at the monastery of Clonfert-Mulloe in Leinster, quoted chapter 24 of Isidore's *De ortu et obitu patrum* in his *Egloga de moralibus in Iob*.¹⁰ Like-wise, in his hymn *Lorica*,¹¹ Laidcenn heavily relies on Isidore's *Etymologiae*, especially Book II, i, for at least eighty-six words referring to parts of the body,¹² although Herren thinks it very likely that the Isidorian encyclopaedia was supplemented by an unknown Greco-Latin glossary (or glossaries) of the same kind as the *Hermeneumata pseudo-dositheana* containing anatomical vocabulary.¹³ Herren has also recorded some striking parallels in the use that both the author of the *Lorica* and the author (or authors) of one of the most celebrated and enigmatic Hiberno-Latin texts, the *Hisperica famina*,¹⁴ make of the *Etymologiae*.¹⁵

Isidore's encyclopaedia, or possibly glossaries based on it, represents the source of a considerable portion of the vocabulary of the *Hisperica famina*, since the *Etymologiae* provide numerous synonyms, mainly nouns.¹⁶ These synonyms are arranged in clusters, and the *Hisperica famina* have themselves been described as a kind of collection of *synonyma*.¹⁷ The author(s) of the *Hisperica famina* also indirectly derived from the *Etymologiae* obscure, bizarre words, which are typical of Hisperic diction and which they adapted according to etymological principles.¹⁸ Thus, for example, the verb *populare* (*A-text*, line 40) is not used in the ordinary meaning of 'to destroy, to plunder,' but, since it is understood as related to *populus*, it is instead taken to mean 'to

people,' hence 'to produce, to spring forth.'¹⁹ The author of the *Lorica* seems to make an analogous use of the *Etymologiae*, and the *Lorica* and the *Hisperica famina* also share a number of words not found in their Isidorian source.²⁰

On the basis of these and other analogies,²¹ Herren has concluded that the *Lorica* and the *Hisperica famina* are contemporaneous, and that they were both likely composed between 650, which is the date by which the *Etymologiae* may well have reached Ireland,²² and the early 660s, when we can date Laidcenn's death. In setting the year 650 as the *terminus post quem* for the dating of the *Hisperica famina*, however, Herren is also influenced by Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* III, 27, where it is reported that in the days of bishops Finan and Colman, that is in the years 651–64, many Anglo-Saxons went to Ireland to pursue their education and enjoyed free hospitality there.²³ Now, such groups of Anglo-Saxon scholars have been identified precisely with the wandering *arcatores* of the *Hisperica famina*.²⁴ Herren's *termini* for the dating of the *Hisperica famina*, however, have been received with some reservations, and a more generic dating to the seventh century has been put forward.²⁵ In a recent study Orchard has shown that the context of the *Hisperica famina* is 'an apparently widespread seventh-century Hiberno-Latin wisdom tradition (derived in part from Isidore).'²⁶

Moreover, indirect evidence for Isidore's influence on the *Hisperica famina* could also be detected by means of two other sources of the faminators, namely the *Epitomae* and the *Epistolae*,²⁷ by the enigmatic Virgilius Maro Grammaticus.²⁸ Whatever his country of origin and the circumstances of his life, Virgilius's *floruit* most likely falls in the central decades of the seventh century,²⁹ and he seems to have been familiar with Irish culture and scholars.³⁰ Moreover, Virgilius seems to have been a favourite source with early medieval Irish authors, and the earliest phase of transmission of Virgilius's works is Irish.³¹ Without making the use of his works an Irish symptom,³² Virgilius can therefore be considered 'to be a writer closely associated with the Irish.'³³ In particular, what concerns us most here is that Virgilius apparently knew and used the *Etymologiae*,³⁴ and his writings show so many features typical of Hisperic literature that he can be considered as a predecessor of, or at least a contemporary with, the faminators.

All things considered, it can be said that Isidore's *Etymologiae* reached Ireland by the late seventh century, possibly during its central decades. They certainly were the best known and most influential Isidorian work in Ireland, and their transmission to the British Isles will be discussed at some length below. The *Etymologiae* were, however, not the only text by Isidore that reached the Irish at a very early date. The *Hisperica famina*, for example, also include among their sources *De natura rerum* and *De differentiis uerborum*,³⁵ and in their 'assonantal prose' betray a stylistic influence from the *Synonyma* as well as from seventh-century Spanish *Reimprosa* in general.³⁶ (One possible Spanish stylistic model and source of Hisperic Latin could be identified in King Sisebut.)³⁷ Indeed, Hillgarth has rated the *Synonyma* one of the major contributions of Spain to seventh-century Ireland, claiming that 'Isidore's *Synonyma* gave the Irish writers a new style [which] was to be put to good use by the authors of the *Hisperica famina*.'³⁸

Therefore, *De natura rerum*, *De differentiis uerborum*, and the *Synonyma* may also have arrived in Ireland at around the same time as the *Etymologiae*. Two grammatical works traditionally associated with late seventh-century Ireland show knowledge of Isidore, namely the *Ars grammatica* by Malsachanus,³⁹ and the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum*.⁴⁰ However, Vivian Law has demonstrated that the former is an eighth-century text by an Irish author, and the *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* too dates to the early eighth century, although it can largely be regarded as a compendium of seventh-century Irish erudition.⁴¹ A *terminus ad quem* may be inferred from Bischoff's identification of the *Anonymus*'s addressee with the *Cumianus* 'Klosterbischof' of Bobbio, who died during Liutprand's reign (712–44).⁴² The Bobbio connection of the *Anonymus*'s text is a point of interest, since it would add to the view that this Irish continental foundation was *au fait* with Isidorian scholarship as well as a crucial hub in the dissemination of Isidore's texts.⁴³

The influence exerted by Isidore on Irish scholarship was not limited to grammatical and philological learning, but proved to be all-embracing. To the second half of the seventh century we can date two Irish works of non-grammatical content that are indebted to Isidorian sources, namely *De XII abusiuis saeculi* (630–50),⁴⁴ and

the *Liber de ordine creaturarum*.⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that both texts have long been transmitted under the aegis of Isidorian authorship.⁴⁶ In particular, although Dekkers and Gaar list it among the genuine works by Isidore, *De ordine creaturarum* is now generally considered to be spurious.⁴⁷ The modern editor, Díaz y Díaz, has attributed it to a seventh-century Irish anonymous author, possibly one active in Northumbria.⁴⁸

De ordine creaturarum and *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* are part of that conspicuous group of Isidorian pseudepigrapha that originated in Ireland (or in Irish circles on the continent) between the seventh and the ninth century.⁴⁹ Among these writings we can also include the *Quaestiones de nouo quam de uetere Testamentum* [sic],⁵⁰ the *Liber de numeris*,⁵¹ and the *Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum*,⁵² modelled on Isidore's authentic *De ortu et obitu patrum*.⁵³ Some close similarities have long been pointed out between the *Liber de numeris* and *De ortu et obitu patriarcharum*, and it has been suggested that they could be attributed to the same author, probably someone from the entourage of the Irish bishop of Salzburg, Virgilius († 784).⁵⁴ Be that as it may, *De ortu et obitu patriarcharum* was used as a source by the compiler of the *Old English Martyrology*,⁵⁵ while the authentic *De ortu et obitu patrum* has been classified as a 'probable direct source' of the same text in the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* on-line database.⁵⁶ Following Lapidge's recent attribution of the Latin antecedent of the vernacular martyrology to Acca, bishop of Hexham,⁵⁷ the arrival of the Isidorian text in Northumbria can be dated by the year of Acca's death, that is 740, at the latest.

In sum, the Irish seem to have played a fundamental role in the compilation of Isidorian pseudepigrapha, which would confirm the particular prestige and popularity that Isidore enjoyed among them. Indeed McNally goes so far as to state that the reason for this was that the Irish were the first nation outside Spain 'to take an active interest in the *Wissenschaft* of Isidore.'⁵⁸

In his controversial inventory of Hiberno-Latin and Irish-influenced Latin exegetical writings from the seventh to the ninth century, Bischoff pointed out the use of Isidore in at least eight items: the *Bibelwerk* or 'Irish Reference Bible,' the *Commemoratio Geneseos*, the Commentary on the Creation and Fall (*Gen.*, I–III),

Laidcenn's *Egloga de moralibus in Iob*,⁵⁹ the *Eclogae tractatorum in Psalterium*, the *Expositio IV euangeliorum*, the excerpts from a commentary on and interlinear glosses to the Gospel of Matthew in ms. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. f. 61, and the Commentary on the Epistles of Paul in ms. Munich, BS, Clm 6235.⁶⁰ Bischoff also detected some possible influence or indirect use of the *Etymologiae* in the *Genelogium Iesu Christi secundum carnem* and in pseudo-Hilary, *Expositio in VII epistolas canonicas*.⁶¹

It is perhaps needless to say that Gorman admitted that only a few items, seven in total, considered by Bischoff were either of probable or possible Irish origin but flatly denied that any of them met the definition of 'biblical commentary.'⁶² If, on the one hand, the work of other scholars⁶³ as well as critical editions of a number of texts in Bischoff's tally which have since been published have been allowed to prove (or, in some cases, disprove) the 'Irishness' of many early medieval Latin exegetical texts considered by Bischoff, on the other they have shown that Isidore's influence on such works was significant. For example, in his recent edition of the *Bibelwerk*, MacGinty has confirmed the ultimate Irish inspiration and possible authorship of this text,⁶⁴ and has recorded the use of a number of Isidore's works, most notably the *Etymologiae* and the *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*, and also *De differentiis rerum*,⁶⁵ *De ecclesiasticis officiis*,⁶⁶ *De natura rerum*, the *Sententiae*, as well as the dubious *Liber numerorum*⁶⁷ and the *Quaestiones de nouo quam de uetere Testamentum*.⁶⁸

In their *Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature*, Lapidge and Sharpe have attributed all the eight 'Wendepunkte' items Bischoff considered indebted to Isidorian sources to either Ireland or Celtic *peregrini* on the continent,⁶⁹ with the two exceptions of the *Commemoratio Geneseos* and the Commentary on the Creation and Fall, which have cautiously been classified as works of possible or arguable Celtic origin.⁷⁰ However, the Hiberno-Latin character of the latter two texts has subsequently been supported by Wright,⁷¹ and the same can be said of the *Eclogae tractatorum in Psalterium*.⁷² As to the *Expositio IV euangeliorum*, 'the case for [its Irish origin] though substantial, remains inconclusive,'⁷³ while a 'thoroughly Irish' manuscript context for the Würzburg commentary on and glosses to Matthew has been recently summarized by Wright.⁷⁴ Finally, the Commentary on the Epistles of Paul too belongs to a

group of 'Wendepunkte' items for which Wright has pointed out an insular or specifically Irish manuscript context and transmission.⁷⁵ But with the exception of the *Bibelwerk* and Laidcenn's *Egloga de moralibus in Iob*, the exact debt of all these texts to Isidore still awaits a thorough assessment.

To this group of eight items allegedly relying on Isidorian sources, at least fifteen more texts from Bischoff's inventory can be added which are indebted to Isidore's works. Firstly, it may be worth discussing briefly the 'Wendepunkte' text which has been crucial to Gorman's 'critique' of Bischoff's work, that is, the commentary on Genesis, *De operibus VI dierum*.⁷⁶ Gorman took pains to confute systematically Bischoff's description of this commentary, finally rejecting any possible connection of it with Ireland or Irish scholarship at large.⁷⁷ It is, however, to Gorman's credit to have shown that *De operibus VI dierum* heavily relies on Isidore's *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*,⁷⁸ and his discovery has in turn been given new importance by Wright's recent reassessment of Gorman's case in favour of a likely origin of the commentary within an Irish milieu.⁷⁹

Secondly, the 'Wendepunkte' texts collectively edited by McNally in 1973 all count Isidore among their sources.⁸⁰ This edition includes the *Pauca de libris catholicorum scriptorum in euangelia excerpta*,⁸¹ the *Quaestiones uel glosae in euangelio nomine*,⁸² the *Quaestiones euangelii*,⁸³ *Ex dictis Sancti Hieronimi*,⁸⁴ *Praefatio secundum Marcum*,⁸⁵ *Commentarius epistolae Iacobi*,⁸⁶ pseudo-Hilary, *Expositio in VII epistolas canonicas*,⁸⁷ and the *Virtutes, quas Dominus dominica die fecit*.⁸⁸ All of these texts draw on the *Etymologiae* and a few of them on Isidore's own exegetical writings, namely the *Allegoriae quaedam S. Scripturae*,⁸⁹ *In libros ueteris ac noui Testamenti prooemia*,⁹⁰ *De ortu et obitu patrum*, and the *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*. Finally, individual items draw on *De differentiis uerborum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *De natura rerum*, and the *Sententiae*, as well as on the Isidorian pseudepigrapha *De ordine creaturarum*, *De ortu et obitu patriarcharum*, and the *Liber de numeris*.⁹¹

In addition to the above-mentioned items, McNally also edited a text that Bischoff briefly mentioned in the introduction to his inventory together with other 'Exzerptensammlungen [irisches Charakters],'⁹² namely the *Prebium de multorum* [sic]

exemplaribus.⁹³ This text consists of a question-and-answer dialogue, rather unsophisticated in spirit,⁹⁴ and it draws on at least three of Isidore's texts, that is the *Etymologiae*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, and the *Sententiae*, as well as the pseudepigraphal *Liber de numeris*. The relationship with the latter work is particularly close, and it is more than likely that both the *Prebium* and the *Liber de numeris* originated in the Salzburg area at the time of bishop Virgilius.⁹⁵

Other recent critical editions of 'Wendepunkte' items have cast further light on the debt of early Irish or Irish-influenced exegesis to Isidore. In his edition of the two recensions of the *Liber questionum in euangeliiis*⁹⁶ published in 2003, Rittmueller conservatively dated the original text to c. 725 and attributed it to an anonymous Irish author writing in Ireland, possibly at Bangor.⁹⁷ What is more, five of Isidore's works were drawn on, namely the *Allegoriae*, *De differentiis rerum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, the *Etymologiae*, and the *Sententiae*.⁹⁸

Two other 'Wendepunkte' commentaries on the Gospels, namely the *Commentarius in Lucam* and the *Commentarius in Iohannem*,⁹⁹ have been solidly placed by their editor in the Irish tradition.¹⁰⁰ In particular, like the *Liber de numeris* and the *Prebium de multorum exemplaribus*, these two commentaries very likely originated in the circle of the erudite Irish bishop of Salzburg, Virgilius, and can therefore be dated to the years 780–5.¹⁰¹ Both commentaries draw on Isidorian sources, namely the *Allegoriae*, *Etymologiae*, and the *Prooemia*, and at least the *Commentarium in Lucam* also relies on *De ortu et obitu patrum*.¹⁰²

A later commentary on the Gospel of John, the *Expositio Iohannis* in ms. Angers, BM 275,¹⁰³ was written at the beginning of the ninth century at or near Tours by an Irishman or a continental scribe trained by Irish scholars, or else by a scribe copying an Irish exemplar.¹⁰⁴ The commentary borrowed, whether directly or not, from a few Isidorian works, including the *Allegoriae*, *De differentiis rerum*, the *Etymologiae*, and the dubious *Liber numerorum*.¹⁰⁵

The Irish connections of the pseudo-Jerome commentary on the Gospel of Mark, the *Commentarius in euangelium Marci*,¹⁰⁶ 'remain in doubt',¹⁰⁷ and the modern editor has aired scepticism as to the Irish origin and authorship of this text, cautioning that it would be safer to label it as Celtic-Latin rather than as Hiberno-Latin.¹⁰⁸

Cahill does record a borrowing from Isidore's *De ortu et obitu patrum*, a text which, however, he considers spurious, so that in his introduction he denies any trace of Isidore in the commentary altogether.¹⁰⁹

Conversely, we are now in a position to exclude the use of Isidore's works in a few 'Wendepunkte' texts, such as, for example, the glosses to Psalms XXXIX – CLI in the eighth-century Northumbrian ms. Vatican City, BAV, Pal. lat. 68;¹¹⁰ the allegorical and moral explanations of the Hebrew names in the genealogy opening the Gospel of Matthew, namely the *Interpretatio mystica progenitorum Christi*,¹¹¹ as well as the *Canon euangeliorum*,¹¹² a poem on the canons of the Gospels, both attributed to Ailerán († 665), perhaps lector at the monastery of Clonard, Co. Meath;¹¹³ two recensions of the commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews,¹¹⁴ the Irish origin of which has been confuted;¹¹⁵ and a *Commentarius de Apocalypsi*,¹¹⁶ which is attributed to Isidore in at least one manuscript witness but which does not depend on Isidorian sources.¹¹⁷ Finally, pseudo-Augustine, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae libri III*,¹¹⁸ certainly an Irish work from the mid-seventh century, shows no knowledge of Isidore.¹¹⁹

Early medieval Irish or Irish-influenced exegetical learning, however, stretches beyond Bischoff's inventory. Early medieval Hiberno-Latin exegetical texts not included in Bischoff's list are an epitome of Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*,¹²⁰ the treatise *De locis sanctis* by Adomnán of Iona († 704),¹²¹ and an epitome of Julian of Eclanum's translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Expositio in psalmos*,¹²² none of which, however, shows any use of Isidore.

'Irish symptoms' have also been detected in the *In Pentateuchum commentarii*,¹²³ the only continuous commentary on the Pentateuch surviving from the early Middle Ages, which has traditionally been attributed to pseudo-Bede.¹²⁴ The 'core text' of this commentary has been traced by Gorman to Spain in the second half of the seventh century, and Isidore's *Allegoriae* have been identified as one of the major patristic sources of this base recension (a).¹²⁵ Isidore is also one of the patristic authorities drawn on in a long interpolated recension (b), which is the PL version of the *In Pentateuchum commentarii*.¹²⁶ Gorman has argued that the no-longer extant commentary which was likely drawn on

for the interpolations making up the b-recension had no Irish connections,¹²⁷ but Wright has instead pointed out that ‘almost all the “Irish” features noted by previous scholars [are concentrated] in the interpolated sections’ and therefore concluded that the putative source-commentary of the b-recension must have had some Irish affiliations.¹²⁸ A very intriguing link with both Isidorian and Irish erudition is also provided by yet a further recension of the pseudo-Bedan commentary (g).¹²⁹ According to Gorman, this latter recension was put together by the end of the seventh century presumably within the same milieu where the original a-recension had originated and with the intent to update and complete a.¹³⁰ In one of its main witnesses, the g-recension is attributed to Isidore, and this attribution may be a reflection both of an origin of g in late seventh-century Spain and of the role of Isidore as a source of it.¹³¹ In fact, an excerpt added to g is derived from Isidore’s *De natura rerum* and includes material from interpolations to the so-called long recension of the Isidorian treatise which apparently originated in an Irish-influenced milieu and the transmission of which is linked to the activity of Anglo-Saxon missionaries.¹³²

Early Irish scriptural scholarship has also left some vernacular testimony, and here too Isidore’s influence is noticeable. A commentary on the Sermon on the Mount according to Matthew, the so-called Lambeth Commentary,¹³³ was written c. 725 mainly in Irish, but with extensive Latin quotations, and features at least a citation from the *Etymologiae*.¹³⁴ Equally, an early eighth-century vernacular exegetical writing, the ‘Old Irish Treatise on the Psalter’ (c. 800), shows familiarity with Isidore’s *Etymologiae*,¹³⁵ especially with regard to a question which received much attention from the Irish, namely the authorship of the Psalms, as well as the explanation of many technical terms of Psalm exegesis.¹³⁶ It might be noted in passing that these two works have been acknowledged by Gorman as the only truly exegetical texts surviving from early medieval Ireland, although they preserve only ‘some very faint traces’ of what might have been the exegetical work carried out there.¹³⁷

Finally, the *Florilegium frisingense*¹³⁸ fittingly concludes this review of early Irish exegetical scholarship, since it is a veritable compendium of distinctively Irish exegetical as well as theological

and homiletic literature.¹³⁹ This collection is uniquely attested in ms. Munich, BS, Clm 6433, a codex written at Freising in the second half of the eighth century by the Northumbrian-trained Anglo-Saxon scribe Peregrinus, who was presumably also the compiler of the *florilegium*.¹⁴⁰ Isidore is a major source, and the *Synonyma* in particular, as well as the *Sententiae* and *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, are abundantly drawn on.¹⁴¹ The compiler also relied on the Isidorian pseudepigrapha *De ordine creaturarum*, the *Sermo ad carnes tollendas*,¹⁴² the *Liber de ecclesiasticis dogmatibus*,¹⁴³ and, especially, *De ortu et obitu patriarcharum* and the *Liber de numeris*.¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, the *Florilegium frisingense* is immediately followed in the manuscript by the second book of the *Synonyma* and by yet another early medieval *florilegium*, the *Liber scintillarum* by Defensor of Ligugé,¹⁴⁵ which is heavily indebted to the Isidorian text itself,¹⁴⁶ and to which the *Frisingense* is very similar.¹⁴⁷ These joint circumstances, that is the use of the *Synonyma* as a source by the compiler – presumably the Anglo-Saxon Peregrinus¹⁴⁸ – of the *Florilegium frisingense* and the occurrence of the Isidorian text – even if incomplete – within the same manuscript alongside the *Liber scintillarum*, seem to corroborate further the currency that the *Synonyma* enjoyed within insular circles as well as their association with and frequent use as a source of *florilegia* and similar miscellanies.¹⁴⁹

The Irish also drew on Isidore's expertise in canon law. The canons issued by the fourth council of Toledo were included in the *Collectio hispana*,¹⁵⁰ and thereby must have reached the British Isles by the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century, when in all likelihood the *Collectio canonum hibernensis* was put together.¹⁵¹ Wasserscheben dated the compilation of the *Hibernensis* between the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth; more recently, however, Lapidge has suggested a dating to c. 725.¹⁵² The prologue of the *Hispana* is found in at least four manuscripts of the *Hibernensis*, and the Irish collection also included excerpts from at least seven works by Isidore: the *Etymologiae*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, the *Sententiae*, the *Chronica*,¹⁵³ the *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*, the *Epistola ad Massonam*,¹⁵⁴ and the *Synonyma*. In particular, the *Hibernensis* drew on paragraph 98 of the second book of the *Synonyma*.¹⁵⁵ Since the *Hibernensis* was compiled by the first quarter of the

eighth century, the use of Isidorian source-texts adds to and confirms the evidence already discussed that at least some twelve works by Isidore were known in early medieval Ireland: that is (in alphabetical order) the *Allegoriae*, the *Chronica*, *De differentiis uerborum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *De natura rerum*, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, the *Epistola ad Massonam*, the *Etymologiae*, the *Prooemia*, the *Questiones in uetus Testamentum*, the *Sententiae*, and the *Synonyma*. In particular, as Davies has noted, the *lectiones* of the Isidorian works used in the *Hibernensis* suggest ‘striking links [with] the manuscript tradition preserved at Bobbio’ and other insular foundations on the continent.¹⁵⁶

In the eighth century, knowledge of Isidorian works became even more widespread, and they were used by almost all Hiberno-Latin writers.¹⁵⁷ Isidore was also used as a source in vernacular texts such as the *Auraceipt na nÉces* or *The Scholar’s Primer*, a compendium of Irish poetic and grammatical lore, which relies on Isidore’s *Etymologiae* in various places.¹⁵⁸ The dating of the *Auraceipt* has not been agreed upon, since part of the work has been traditionally assigned to Cenn Faelad († 679), but the language of the text seems at times to date from much later, with some Middle Irish accretions.¹⁵⁹ Finally, Isidore’s *Chronica* was apparently used as the basis of the lost ‘Old Irish Chronicle.’¹⁶⁰

Isidore in Anglo-Saxon England¹⁶¹

As far as Anglo-Saxon England is concerned, the earliest attestations to the knowledge of texts from Visigothic Spain in general, and by Isidore in particular, can be dated to the Canterbury school of Theodore († 690) and Hadrian († 709 or 710),¹⁶² or else to the generation of Aldhelm (c. 640?–709 or 710), abbot of Malmesbury and bishop of Sherborne. The *Ars grammatica* by Julian of Toledo (c. 625–90),¹⁶³ for instance, was known to Aldhelm and Bede, and the archetype of all existing manuscripts of that text seems to have been insular.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, the two earliest manuscripts preserving Julian’s *Prognosticon futuri saeculi*, an eschatological compendium, both have insular connections.¹⁶⁵ Abbot Hadrian may have been the recipient of a letter by the same Julian; the letter itself does not survive, but is mentioned in the *Vita S. Iuliani* by Felix bishop of Toledo (693–8).¹⁶⁶ More

importantly, the school of Theodore and Hadrian appears to have been a centre in which Isidore's works were circulating.¹⁶⁷ In the Canterbury Biblical Commentaries,¹⁶⁸ the *Etymologiae* are quoted verbatim and at length on at least two occasions, and a passage in the commentary on the Gospel of John closely echoes *De differentiis uerborum*.¹⁶⁹ In general, Isidore can be considered to be the third most used patristic source of the Canterbury Commentaries after Augustine and Jerome, although, unlike these two, Isidore is never cited by name.¹⁷⁰ With regard to the corpus of glosses stemming from the Canterbury school, that is the so-called Leiden family of glossaries,¹⁷¹ no fewer than three batches in the Leiden glossary¹⁷² consist of glosses to two Isidorian texts, namely *De natura rerum* and *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, and a few glosses have been traced to the *Etymologiae*.¹⁷³ In sum, the evidence provided by both the Biblical Commentaries and the Leiden glosses attests to the presence of at least four works by Isidore at the late seventh-century Canterbury school, namely the *Etymologiae*, *De natura rerum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, and *De differentiis uerborum*.

Further evidence in this regard is also offered by an epitome of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, first edited by Lapidge in 1988–9.¹⁷⁴ This epitome, referred to by its editor as the *De diuersis rebus*, is now preserved in a composite continental manuscript, Paris, BN, lat. 1750, fols. 140–52, written somewhere in northern France – possibly Fleury – c. 800. On palaeo-graphical grounds and because of the presence of eight Old English glosses, it has been demonstrated that this French manuscript must have been copied from an exemplar written in Anglo-Saxon minuscule. In turn, the Old English glosses have been identified as Mercian and dating close to or not long after c. 700. The interesting implications suggested by these glosses is not just that 'in Anglo-Saxon England the [*Etymologiae*] were excerpted, studied and glossed in the vernacular from as early as [c.] 700,'¹⁷⁵ but also that they can be related to at least two members of the Leiden family of glossaries, the Épinial-Erfurt and Werden I glossaries.¹⁷⁶ In Lapidge's words, therefore, 'the Isidorian epitome is a reflection, perhaps at one or more removes, of the scholarly activity engendered at late seventh-century Canterbury by Theodore and Hadrian.'¹⁷⁷

Aldhelm was a student at the school of Theodore and Hadrian

for at least a couple of years in the early 670s;¹⁷⁸ indeed, he is the only student of the Canterbury school to have left a substantial corpus of Latin writings,¹⁷⁹ within which knowledge of a number of Isidorian texts is noticeable. In the prose *De uirginitate*¹⁸⁰ Aldhelm draws on Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis* and *De ortu et obitu patrum*, while the *Carmen rhythmicum*¹⁸¹ borrows from the *Etymologiae* and *De natura rerum*.¹⁸² In particular, Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Acircium* (685 × 695)¹⁸³ is a most significant witness to the knowledge of at least three Isidorian texts in the early Anglo-Saxon period. The *Epistola* is in fact an extensive, composite text, including an arithmological tract on the number 'seven,' two treatises on Latin metre (*De metris*) and scansion (*De pedum regulis*), and a collection of one hundred *Enigmata*. The numerological treatise included in the Aldhelmian epistle draws on the anonymous *Liber numerorum*,¹⁸⁴ for which an Isidorian authorship has been put forward.¹⁸⁵ Also, the *Epistola* draws on the Isidorian treatise *De natura rerum*,¹⁸⁶ and it has been demonstrated that Aldhelm made extensive use of the *Etymologiae* in his *Enigmata*.¹⁸⁷ Equally, another text closely associated with Aldhelm, although not by him, namely the *Liber monstrorum*, also draws on the *Etymologiae*.¹⁸⁸

Last but not least, Aldhelm very probably drew on the *Synonyma* in the *ubi sunt* passage that concludes the *Epistola ad Acircium*,¹⁸⁹ and explicitly mentions the Isidorian work in the same epistle – within *De pedum regulis* – as an example of a text employing a dialogical structure.¹⁹⁰ The passage in question reads:

Videor itaque mihi hoc planius et apertius patefacere
posse, si per interrogationem et responsionem
pauxillulum reciprocis uicibus stilus uarietur,
quemadmodum beatus Augustinus per multa librorum
corpora hoc est soliloquiorum et de libero arbitrio et eo,
quem de magistro praetitulauit, et sex libris de musica
fecisse comprobatur, uel Isidorus duobus uoluminibus,
quae sinonima uel polionima praetitulantur[.]¹⁹¹

[It then seems to me that this can be shown more clearly and openly, if the style may be varied a little by means of question and answer arranged in reciprocal succession, just as St Augustine is acknowledged to have done in

many collections of books, that is the *Soliloquia*, and *De libero arbitrio*, and that book which he entitled *De magistro*, and the six books *De musica*; or also Isidore, in the two volumes which are entitled *Sinonima* or *Polionima*].

It is noteworthy that Aldhelm too associates the *Synonyma* with Augustine's *Soliloquia*, but distinguishes the Isidorian text from the latter by referring to it by the title *Synonyma*, as well as attesting to yet another title, namely *Polionima*.¹⁹² As has been pointed out, the title *Synonyma* has been considered characteristic of recension L;¹⁹³ therefore it has been suggested that Aldhelm must have known a copy of that recension.¹⁹⁴ This circumstance is consistent with the fact that the two earliest Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the *Synonyma* both contain the L-text.¹⁹⁵ According to Elfassi, recension L originated from the exemplar of the *Synonyma* that Isidore sent to Braulio in Saragossa,¹⁹⁶ and its circulation is attested in seventh-century Spain. From there it would have reached England by a *direct* sea-route by the end of the seventh century or beginning of the eighth century at the latest, as Aldhelm's *Epistola* as well as the two above-mentioned Anglo-Saxon manuscript witnesses of the *Synonyma* attest.¹⁹⁷ Recension Φ would instead have had a continental transmission, via Septimania and the Rhône valley to north France,¹⁹⁸ not unlike the 'French family' of Isidore's *De natura rerum*.¹⁹⁹

It would be tempting to infer from Aldhelm's testimony that the *Synonyma* were also among the Isidorian texts known to Theodore and Hadrian and used at their school. However, Bischoff and Lapidge have warned that Aldhelm is a problematic source with regard to the Canterbury school and have recommended care 'in assuming that the knowledge of any book which Aldhelm quotes was necessarily acquired [at the school of Theodore and Hadrian].'²⁰⁰ It is at least as possible, then, that Aldhelm owed his knowledge of the *Synonyma* to his Irish connections. Before attending the school of Theodore and Hadrian in his late youth, Aldhelm received his early education from a learned Irishman, generally identified as Máildub, and seems to have been familiar with Irish culture and scholarship.²⁰¹ It is also worth pointing out that Acircius – the addressee of the Aldhelmian epistle in which the *Synonyma* are explicitly referred to – has been identified with

Aldfrith, king of Northumbria between 685 and 705. Aldfrith had strong Irish connections, as he was the natural son of Oswiu, king of Northumbria (†670), and of an Irish mother; he was fluent in Irish and had spent some time in exile in Ireland or perhaps at Iona.²⁰²

Interestingly, an author ‘thoroughly familiar with the writings of Aldhelm’ is the second literary witness to the knowledge of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England, namely Felix.²⁰³ Unfortunately, nothing is known of his life and schooling or of the centre where he composed the Latin *Vita S. Guthlaci*²⁰⁴ in the years between 720 and 749.²⁰⁵ The only known circumstance concerning the origin of the *Vita S. Guthlaci* is that it was commissioned by Ælfwald, king of the East Angles (713–49). As Bremmer has recently shown, Felix drew directly on the *Synonyma*, rather than on an intermediate source such as Defensor’s *Liber scintillarum*, in at least one chapter of his *Vita*.²⁰⁶ In turn, Felix’s work was variously translated and adapted into the vernacular, since at least two prose versions, the so-called Vespasian *Life* and Vercelli homily xxiii, as well as two verse versions, namely *Guthlac A* and *B*, both in the Exeter Book, are attested.²⁰⁷ In particular, the Old English prose renditions provide an interesting example of vernacularization of at least an extract of the *Synonyma*.²⁰⁸

If Theodore, Hadrian, and Aldhelm are the first witnesses to the circulation of Isidore’s texts in Southumbria, the earliest evidence for the reception north of the Humber of at least one work by Isidore, namely *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, is the anonymous *Vita S. Cuthberti* composed by a monk of the community of Lindisfarne between 698 and 705.²⁰⁹ A generation after Aldhelm, Bede used Isidore’s *Chronica* in his *De temporum ratione*.²¹⁰ Predictably, Isidore was a source for Bede’s handbooks of orthography, rhetoric, and prosody, such as *De ortographia*, *De schematibus et tropis*, and *De arte metrica*, where the *Etymologiae* and *De differentiis rerum* are drawn on. However, Isidore was also an important exegetical source for Bede, as the *Etymologiae*, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *De differentiis rerum*, the *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*,²¹¹ and the *Sententiae*²¹² were drawn on in Bede’s extensive exegetical corpus.²¹³ Bede must also have been very familiar with *De natura rerum*.²¹⁴ Furthermore, he used Isidore’s *Versus in bibliotheca viii*, dedicated to Jerome, in his

Epistola ad Pleguinam,²¹⁵ and, intriguingly, the same verse occurs in the famous *Codex Amiatinus* (c. 700).²¹⁶ Last but not least, Bede drew on the *Etymologiae* and, probably, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* in his major historical work, the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Bede's attitude towards Isidore has often been described as critical when not deliberately censorious,²¹⁷ but McCready has recently challenged this prejudice and has convincingly demonstrated that if Bede surpassed and at times explicitly corrected Isidore, nevertheless he 'treated Isidore the same way he did his other authorities.'²¹⁸

Knowledge of Isidore's works in eighth-century Anglo-Saxon England was by no means limited to such celebrated scholars as Aldhelm or Bede. Another piece of evidence concerning the knowledge of the *Etymologiae* on the part of an Anglo-Saxon author in the second half of the eighth century is the letter written by the obscure cleric Cathwulf to Charlemagne in 775 where he quotes from the Isidorian encyclopaedia.²¹⁹

In the eighth century, the group of Anglo-Saxon missionaries working with Boniface (c. 675–754) appear to have created a distinctive intellectual environment that held Isidorian scholarship in high esteem and contributed to its diffusion. Lapidge, for instance, has argued that 'it is not inconceivable' that the compiler of the epitome *De diuersis rebus* may have belonged to the same milieu as Boniface.²²⁰ What is 'probably the earliest Latin work written in Germany,' namely the *Vita S. Bonifatii*, composed soon after Boniface's martyrdom by Willibald of Mainz, makes use of the *Etymologiae*.²²¹ A generation later, another two hagiographical texts, the *Vita S. Willibaldi*, dedicated to Willibald (†c. 787), bishop of Eichstätt, and the *Vita S. Wynnebaldi*, dedicated to Wynnebald (†761), abbot of Heidenheim in Thuringia and brother of Willibald, both written by Hygeburg, an English nun at Heidenheim, are indebted to Isidore's *Sententiae*.²²²

Furthermore, the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma* shows an important connection to Boniface, since the missionary's own handwriting has apparently been identified in one of the two earliest surviving Anglo-Saxon witnesses of the *Synonyma*, that is, St Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, Q. v. I. 15, and, as will be discussed below, a number of witnesses of the *Synonyma* originate from the area of the Anglo-Saxon missions on the continent.²²³ The role of Boniface and his

missionaries in the transmission of an Isidorian text has so far been best illustrated in the case of the cosmological treatise *De natura rerum*, a text that had an early and long-lasting impact on both Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England. The latter country in particular seems to have played a pivotal role in the textual vicissitudes of the Isidorian treatise, and since this is one of the few writings by Isidore that has so far received a proper modern critical edition, its transmission will be examined in some detail below.²²⁴

Alongside Boniface and his entourage, another prestigious representative of Anglo-Saxon learning active on the continent, Alcuin of York (†804), also deserves a special mention, because he seems to have had a high regard for Isidore and certainly knew the *Synonyma*.²²⁵

Isidorian works apparently enjoyed long-lasting popularity throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. This seems also to be the case in the ninth century, notoriously the most obscure period of Anglo-Saxon literary culture. However, evidence shows that the *Synonyma* were known and used in Mercia in the first half of the ninth century.²²⁶ Eventually, some of Isidore's works may have been available at King Alfred's court. According to the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* on-line database, Isidore's *De natura rerum* was possibly drawn on in Alfred's version of Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae*, and some of the early entries in the Peterborough Chronicle might have been borrowed from Isidore's *Chronica*.

With the cultural revival of the Benedictine Reform movement in the late Anglo-Saxon period, Isidore's reputation remained high. Significantly, the very founding text of the English Benedictine Reform, namely the Old English version of the *Regula S. Benedicti* by Æthelwold (904 × 909–984), abbot of Abingdon and bishop of Winchester,²²⁷ is indebted to Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis*. Also, Æthelwold seems to have known the *Synonyma*, since he donated a copy to the monastery of Medehamstede.²²⁸

At least another two Latin texts emanating from Æthelwold's prestigious school at Winchester show familiarity with Isidore's works. One is the *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*, the first biography of Æthelwold written after his death by Wulfstan, sometime *cantor* at the Old Minster, who relied on the *Etymologiae*. The other text is the *Translatio et miracula S. Swithuni* by Lantfred, a monk originally from Fleury who spent part of his life among the community of

Winchester Old Minster;²²⁹ he made use of *De differentiis rerum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, and the *Etymologiae*. Likewise, use of Isidore's *Sententiae* is detectable in the anonymous *Vita S. Birini*, composed at Winchester in the eleventh century and dedicated to Birinus, another saint venerated at Winchester 'as a satellite of the cult of the more famous St Swithun.'²³⁰

A great continental scholar, Abbo of Fleury (†1004), personal friend of two fathers of the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform, Archbishops Dunstan and Oswald, spent two years of his life teaching at the abbey of Ramsey and borrowed from Isidore's *Etymologiae* in writings composed both before and during his stay in England. One of Abbo's students at Ramsey was Byrhtferth (†c. 1020), who has left a rather vast corpus of writings, mainly of scientific content, such as the *Computus* and the *Enchiridion*, as well as sets of glosses to Bede's scientific and computistical tracts *De natura rerum* and *De temporum ratione*. Byrhtferth 'seems to have known [the *Etymologiae*] intimately'²³¹ and extensively borrowed from them, as well as from Isidore's *De natura rerum*, even if perhaps indirectly.²³²

Arguably the most learned scholar and most elegant writer of late Anglo-Saxon England, Ælfric of Eynsham (†c. 1010), shows familiarity with a number of Isidore's works. Like Bede nearly three centuries before him and eventually Byrhtferth, Ælfric too borrowed from Isidore's *De natura rerum* in his computistical tract *De temporibus anni*. In his vast homiletic and hagiographical corpus, Ælfric drew on the *Chronica*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*,²³³ *De ortu et obitu patrum*,²³⁴ the *Prooemia*, the *Etymologiae*,²³⁵ and the *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*.²³⁶ The latter two Isidorian texts were also sources for Ælfric's Old English version of Alcuin's exegetical work *Interrogationes Sigeuulfi in Genesin*.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* on-line database records the use of two Isidorian texts, namely the *Etymologiae* and the *Allegoriae*, as probable or possible direct sources of two Old English poems, that is *The Order of the World* and *Exodus*, respectively.²³⁷ The possible borrowing from the *Allegoriae* in the latter poem is particularly significant, because it seems both to confirm the role of Isidore as a fundamental exegetical source in Anglo-Saxon England and to provide some evidence as to the actual use by an Anglo-Saxon author of the

Allegoriae, a text which does not seem to have been borrowed elsewhere in the extant corpus, but which is attested in no fewer than eight manuscript witnesses as recorded by Gneuss's *Handlist*.²³⁸

As Lapidge has shown, surviving manuscripts and inventories of books emanating from Anglo-Saxon centres, whether in England or on the continent, can add to the evidence provided by citations and thus offer precious data concerning the scope of 'the Anglo-Saxon library.'²³⁹ For example, besides the Isidorian texts which served as sources to known Anglo-Saxon authors mentioned above, at least two other works can be added, namely *De fide catholica contra iudeos*, another Isidorian text of theological and exegetical content,²⁴⁰ and *De uiris illustribus*.²⁴¹ The latter is attested in three manuscripts listed by Gneuss,²⁴² while the former features in no fewer than five witnesses recorded in the *Handlist*²⁴³ and a copy of it can be identified with an item in the list of books donated to Exeter by Bishop Leofric in the second half of the eleventh century.²⁴⁴ Likewise, the evidence provided by surviving manuscripts and library inventories from both England and the area of Anglo-Saxon mission on the continent supports the case for the knowledge and circulation among Anglo-Saxon scholars of Isidorian texts which were otherwise only rarely drawn on (at least according to present scholarship), such as the *Sententiae*, featuring in four manuscripts of Gneuss's *Handlist* and in three library inventories, and *De differentiis uerborum*, which appears in five manuscripts of the *Handlist* and in one inventory.²⁴⁵ Also, the sheer number of manuscript witnesses and booklists containing *De natura rerum*, the *Etymologiae*, and the *Synonyma*²⁴⁶ confirms that these three texts were the first Isidorian works that reached Anglo-Saxon England and the most abundantly attested in Anglo-Saxon circles. In particular, if we consider the use made of the *Synonyma* by named authors such as Aldhelm, Felix, Alcuin, and later on Ælfric Bata, besides the anonymous authors of various prayers, a charter, and Vercelli Homily xxii,²⁴⁷ as well as the number of manuscript witnesses of the *Synonyma* circulating both in England and in the area of Anglo-Saxon missions on the continent,²⁴⁸ including the copies mentioned in inventories of Anglo-Saxon libraries,²⁴⁹ the *Synonyma* appear to be the Isidorian text most abundantly attested in pre-Conquest England after the *Etymologiae*.

This survey of the knowledge and use of Isidorian texts in pre-Conquest England is inevitably conservative and tentative. A number of both Old English and Anglo-Latin texts for which Isidore was probably a multiple source or an antecedent source have deliberately not been considered in this discussion. Progress by the two major projects of *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* and SASLC as well as future *Quellenforschung* on individual Anglo-Saxon texts and authors will undoubtedly improve the picture and enable a more precise assessment of the impact of Isidorian scholarship on Anglo-Saxon culture at large. However, it can already be said that Isidore unquestionably exerted a significant influence on a variety of fields of Anglo-Saxon literary culture, ranging from grammar to computus, from history to homiletics and hagiography, from exegesis to charters. In particular, it has been argued that ‘the impact of Isidorian etymology has been detected at all levels of Anglo-Saxon literary culture, from riddles to vernacular sermons.’²⁵⁰ As Lapidge has pointed out, Isidore was, together with Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory, one of the four major patristic authorities for the Anglo-Saxons, and his *Etymologiae*, *De natura rerum*, *Synonyma*, and *De ecclesiasticis officiis* belonged to the ‘small core of staple patristic texts’ housed in a typical Anglo-Saxon library.²⁵¹

The following pages consider the three Isidorian texts most popular in pre-Conquest England, namely *De natura rerum*, the *Etymologiae*, and the *Synonyma*, focusing in particular on their earliest insular manuscript evidence and their routes of transmission to the British Isles.

The Transmission of *De natura rerum* to the British Isles

In the introduction to his path-breaking edition, Fontaine identified three different recensions of *De natura rerum*, each of different length.²⁵² Both the short recension, consisting of forty-six chapters (i.e., chapters 1–43 and 45–7), and the medium recension, consisting of forty-seven chapters (i.e., chapters 1–43 and 45–8), are considered by Fontaine to be authentic, as the last chapter of the medium recension was in all likelihood added by Isidore himself.²⁵³ Both the short and medium recensions are

transmitted together with the flamboyant epistle in verse that King Sisebut, the dedicatee of *De natura rerum*, addressed to Isidore to thank him for the treatise.²⁵⁴ The long recension has been transmitted separately from Sisebut's epistle and includes one more chapter than the medium recension (that is chapter 44, a sort of compendium of Hebrew liturgy and hydrographic vocabulary) as well as a passage of mystical content, the *addition mystique*, inserted in [chapter 1](#). The long recension is attested only in the group of Anglo-Saxon and German manuscripts and, according to Fontaine, must have been developed from the medium recension and first written in Northumbria by the middle of the eighth century. The earliest surviving witness of the long recension is ms. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, F. III. 15f (Fontaine's A), which was written 'doubtless in England' by c. 750.²⁵⁵ The dating of the Basel manuscript represents the *terminus ante quem* for the compilation of the long recension. The *terminus post quem* may be represented by Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Acircium* (685 × 695), in which the verse epistle by Sisebut is quoted. Aldhelm must therefore have known an exemplar of either the short or the medium recension, the latter being more likely according to Fontaine.²⁵⁶ In turn, Aldhelm was the recipient of a letter (695 × 705) addressed to him by a certain *Scottus* eager to become one of his students,²⁵⁷ in which Aldhelm is praised in terms closely reminiscent of the Isidorian dedication to King Sisebut prefacing *De natura rerum*.

In his map of the diffusion of *De natura rerum*, Fontaine draws four possible routes of transmission from Spain to England: of these four itineraries, two would have been by sea either directly or via Ireland; the other two would have taken *De natura rerum* to England either via France or via France and Ireland.²⁵⁸ Fontaine, however, concluded that a direct sea route from Spain to Ireland does not seem likely. Indeed, the earliest surviving Irish witness of the treatise is closely related to the short recension of the French family, which would support the view that *De natura rerum* reached the British Isles via France.²⁵⁹ In sum, according to Fontaine, if *De natura rerum* reached England in an 'Irish edition,' then the latter is likely to have followed a continental route stretching from Spain to northern France through Septimania – the region of southern France then under Visigothic rule which connected Spain to France through the southern Pyrenees – and along the Rhône valley. *De natura rerum* might then have made its

way to Ireland from the southern coasts of Brittany, following the ancient route connecting France and Ireland, and the actual agents of such a transmission might well have been Irish or Anglo-Saxon pilgrims and missionaries.²⁶⁰

Once in England, *De natura rerum* must have had a rapid diffusion, as it was known in both South- and Northumbria by the first quarter of the eighth century. In south England, as we have seen, the Isidorian treatise circulated at the Canterbury school of Theodore and Hadrian and was known to Aldhelm by the late seventh century.²⁶¹ Northumbria, on the other hand, has been pointed out as the most likely location for the redaction of the long recension of *De natura rerum*.²⁶² In particular, it has been argued that the long recension must have originated in an Irish-influenced milieu in Northumbria and that its main distinctive addition, namely chapter 44, apparently represents ‘une érudition plus propement irlandaise,’²⁶³ insofar as its plain geographical subject matter, arranged into basic, glossarial definitions, is reminiscent of the great collections of scholia and glosses in the transmission of which Irish scribes played a crucial role.²⁶⁴ A possible place of origin for the long recension could have been Aldfrith’s court:²⁶⁵ Bede twice praises Aldfrith’s vast erudition,²⁶⁶ and the king surrounded himself with learned ecclesiastics, among whom was Adamnán of Iona.

Certainly, the span of time during which the long recension seems to have been compiled, that is between 685 × 695 and the middle of the eighth century,²⁶⁷ largely coincides with a phase of great cultural development in Northumbria, to which the Irish undoubtedly contributed.²⁶⁸ Much of the study then conducted in Northumbrian schools was centred on computus, the science of calculating the date of Easter and other movable Christian feasts.²⁶⁹ As Ó Cróinín has shown,²⁷⁰ the computistical field was the one in which Northumbrian ecclesiastics were most dependent on the Irish. The computistical sources on which the Irish relied, in their turn, were African and Spanish texts, including Isidore’s *Etymologiae*, especially books V and VI, and his *De natura rerum*.²⁷¹ Bede himself wrote two computistical tracts, *De temporibus liber* (703),²⁷² and the more comprehensive *De temporum ratione* (725),²⁷³ the debt of which to Irish sources has often been stressed. The seventh-century Irish origin of the computistical material in

the library of Wearmouth–Jarrow was first pointed out by Jones as early as 1937. Jones argued that these computistical texts had ultimately been derived by the Irish from African and Spanish authors and that they are now best preserved in a group of five manuscripts containing computistical collections, the so-called Sirmond group. It is these computistical texts that Bede himself studied and used as sources for his own computistical works.²⁷⁴ More recently, Ó Cróinín discovered a dating clause common to all but one of the ‘Sirmond’ manuscripts and therefore arguably present in their exemplar, and on the basis of this clause he claimed that this putative exemplar was first written in south Ireland in 658. Ó Cróinín also argued that the path followed by this computistical collection to Wearmouth–Jarrow was via south or southwest England, rather than the more obvious one via Iona.²⁷⁵ As a matter of fact, in late seventh-century Southumbria Aldhelm knew at least part of this computistical material of Irish provenance, since he used it when discussing the Easter question in his *Epistola ad Geruntium*.²⁷⁶

Although *De natura rerum* does not figure among the direct sources of Bede’s two computistical tracts, Bede was very familiar with this text, as he himself composed a treatise of the same title,²⁷⁷ which can be considered a recasting of the Isidorian original.²⁷⁸ Also, it has been shown that in his last days Bede was assembling and translating into Old English a collection of excerpts from Isidore’s *De natura rerum*.²⁷⁹ Fontaine has argued that, like Aldhelm, Bede knew and used the medium recension, but McCready has pointed out that it is equally possible that he knew the short recension.²⁸⁰ If we accept the dating to 703 suggested by Jones for Bede’s *De natura rerum*, it can then be concluded that by the very beginning of the eighth century, Isidore’s *De natura rerum* was known and used in Northumbrian as well as South-umbrian schools.²⁸¹ The success of Isidore’s *De natura rerum* in England lasted throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, since it was eventually a source of Byrhtferth’s *Enchiridion*, although probably at second hand.²⁸² In general, the Isidorian treatise must have been extraordinarily popular in the West in the period 650–800, as is indirectly confirmed by the exceptionally high number of witnesses (twelve in total) dating from before 800.²⁸³

Finally, the dissemination of the long recension of *De natura*

rerum is worth discussing briefly. Although it has been pointed out to me that the attribution of the Basel manuscript to eighth-century England is far from secure,²⁸⁴ this manuscript and its exemplar (Fontaine's c) certainly reached the continental foundation of Fulda by the end of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth. Once it was in Fulda, at least one more copy of *was* produced, what is now ms. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, F. III. 15a (Fontaine's F).²⁸⁵ This circumstance strengthened Fontaine's opinion that the long recension originated in England and that its eventual diffusion on the continent was closely linked to the activity of Boniface and his missionaries, with Fulda in particular playing a pivotal role.²⁸⁶ We know that, in the years following the foundation of Fulda, Boniface received books and presents from Ecgberht, archbishop of York, among others, and Fontaine goes as far as speculating that another possible candidate for the compiler of the long recension, besides a member of King Aldfrith's entourage, might well be Ecgberht.²⁸⁷ The link with Boniface and Fulda is intriguing, because, as the discussion of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma* will show, at least part of this tradition can indeed be associated with Boniface and the Anglo-Saxon missions on the continent in general.²⁸⁸

The Transmission of the *Etymologiae* to the British Isles

Alongside *De natura rerum*, another Isidorian text that reached the British Isles very early on was the *Etymologiae*. As Ó Máille showed in 1921, the early arrival of the Isidorian encyclopaedia left considerable traces in the Irish tradition, where, significantly, the *Etymologiae* were known as the *culmen*, that is the *summa* of knowledge (from the Latin *culmen* [top, summit, ridge]), and Isidore himself was known as *Esodir in chulmin* [Isidore of the Culmen].²⁸⁹ This title alone can be taken to demonstrate the impact that such a compendium of both classical and late antique, secular and Christian lore must have had on 'readers totally ignorant of the Roman world' such as seventh-century Irishmen.²⁹⁰ In addition, it is only the Irish who professed to know when Isidore wrote his *Etymologiae*, that is in the year 618, as

recorded in the Annals of Tigernach.²⁹¹ The influence exerted by the Isidorian encyclopaedia on Irish learning was pervasive and enduring, and one of the symptoms of this influence can be detected in the Irish penchant for the etymological interpretations of names by means of the *tres linguae sacrae*, namely Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.²⁹²

In the case of the *Etymologiae*, we are still very far from the publication of a proper modern critical edition,²⁹³ and as a result, from a detailed, reliable study of the transmission of the more than one thousand extant manuscripts containing the work, in its entirety or in fragments. As far as the British Isles are concerned, however, two important pieces of palaeographical evidence have come to light since the publication of Lindsay's edition in 1911, in the form of two groups of fragments of the *Etymologiae*, for which a late seventh-century Irish origin has been suggested.

The earliest group of these fragments, four in total, is now bound in ms. St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 1399 a. 1 and was discovered and identified in different stages between 1936 and 1955 by Bischoff, Dold, and Duft.²⁹⁴ These fragments have been dated to the seventh century,²⁹⁵ and could well be not only one of the earliest examples of insular script, but also one of the oldest – if not *the* oldest – of all non-Spanish surviving witnesses of the *Etymologiae* and of an Isidorian text in general. Lowe assigned the St Gall fragments to Bobbio, but Bischoff argued that they had no relation to this continental foundation and had instead been written in Ireland.²⁹⁶ However, it has been pointed out to me that Bischoff's argument cannot be substantiated, because the parchment of the fragments is continental,²⁹⁷ and also that the evidence in favour of a seventh-century dating of the St Gall fragments is 'not wonderfully good.'²⁹⁸

The role of Bobbio and of other Irish foundations on the continent in the transmission of Isidore's works is a crucial point, and it emerges again with regard to another fragment of the *Etymologiae* (Book VI, xvi and VII, i), which makes up the flyleaves of a late twelfth-century manuscript, Longleat House, Marquess of Bath, NMR 10589. This codex contains a catalogue of the Glastonbury Abbey estates compiled at the time of Henry of Sully's election as abbot in 1189, but the flyleaves come from a much earlier manuscript that has recently been assigned to a late

seventh-century Irish hand. However, there seems to be no agreement as yet whether its *Schriftheimat* must be located in Ireland or England or in an Irish continental foundation.²⁹⁹ Be that as it may, the original manuscript must have been in England by at least 1189, when Henry of Sully was elected abbot of Glastonbury Abbey, and the manuscript to which our fragment once belonged was dismembered and some of its folia were used as wrappers for Henry's catalogue. Exactly how and when the manuscript reached England is difficult to say. It could have arrived at a very early date, together with those computistical texts that, as we have seen, reached Northumbrian schools from south and south-midlands Ireland via southwest England in the seventh century.³⁰⁰

On the other hand, in those years English scholars were also active in Ireland. Aldhelm is again a precious source on this point, since in his *Epistola ad Efridum*, written by 690, he speaks critically of throngs of English students going to Ireland to pursue their studies.³⁰¹ It might also be relevant that the recipient of this letter has been at times identified with Ecgrith or Heahfrith, abbot of Glastonbury c. 719,³⁰² but Lapidge and Herren are sceptical of this identification.³⁰³ As Lapidge has pointed out, 'no firm dates can be convincingly ascribed to Heahfrith's abbacy,' and even if we admit the date of c. 719, this would be at least three decades later than Aldhelm's letter.³⁰⁴ Certainly, Aldhelm's addressee must have been one of those young Anglo-Saxon scholars migrating to Ireland, of whom Aldhelm speaks with disapproval, since in the letter he is said to have just returned to England after almost six years of study in Ireland.³⁰⁵

As Lapidge has noted, during the Middle Ages various legends circulated about Glastonbury's antiquity, in particular about its alleged associations with the Celtic world.³⁰⁶ According to William of Malmesbury,³⁰⁷ several Irish saints were buried in Glastonbury, such as St Benignus, St Brigit, St Indract, and St Patrick,³⁰⁸ and because of this the English centre continued to attract Irish pilgrims up to William's day (c. 1075–c.1143). However, as Lapidge has shown, the cult of Irish saints at Glastonbury, notably St Patrick and St Indract, can be documented only from the tenth century: so it seems most likely that it is only from that date that Glastonbury can have been a destination for Irish *peregrini*.³⁰⁹ Among those pilgrims there may well have been scholars carrying

books with them, including the manuscript from which the Longleat House fly-leaves derive.

It is perhaps possible to derive some information on the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England from these flyleaves. As Carley and Dooley have suggested, during the abbacy of Henry of Blois (1126–71), almost fifty books were copied for the library, and Isidore's *Etymologiae* can also be counted among these.³¹⁰ In 1247–8, the great catalogue of books *de librario* was compiled and two entries concerning the *Etymologiae* can be found therein: one reads *Ysidorus Ethimologiarum. bon[us]*, presumably referring to the copy made under Henry of Blois; the other reads *Pars Ethimologiarum. Sinonima Ysidori. uetus[tus] et inutil[is]. In uno uolu-mine*.³¹¹ We can only speculate about the reasons why the latter manuscript was in such a state as to be deemed *inutilis*. Possibly it was damaged during a fire in 1184 – even if our flyleaves actually show no sign of fire damage – and for this reason it was then deprived of some folia to serve as flyleaves for the new volume containing the catalogue of Glastonbury Abbey written in 1189, that is, the present Longleat House manuscript. At any rate, after the compilation of Henry of Blois's new copy of the *Etymologiae*, the old manuscript must have been seen as redundant and accordingly disposed of.³¹² If our flyleaves can really be identified as part of the codex *uetustus et inutilis* containing the *Etymologiae* and the *Synonyma*, then this very manuscript would be the earliest insular witness of the *Synonyma* of which we have knowledge.³¹³

Finally, the Longleat House flyleaves offer some precious evidence concerning the likely antecedent of this *uetustus* codex and thereby suggest possible clues about the route(s) of transmission of the Isidorian encyclopaedia to the insular world. The Longleat House flyleaves feature at least one important Spanish symptom, which is found within a paschal table that normally accompanies the text of the *Etymologiae*. Now, what seems to be an addition peculiar to this manuscript is a pair of boxes found within the paschal table containing calculations for the translation of the dating by *anno mundi* into dating by the Spanish era. The odd arrangement of the whole table suggests that what we might be dealing with here is an addition made by the scribe, who was possibly copying within the paschal table what in the exemplar of the present fragments stood as a long marginal

gloss. As Carley and Dooley have pointed out, the dating by Spanish era is a ‘most unusual feature to find in any early medieval manuscript outside Spain and our example may possibly be unique in insular manuscripts.’³¹⁴ What is more, the dating by the Spanish era stops at a year that, translated into *anno Domini* dating, would be 655. The calculations within the boxes would therefore suggest that our fragment derives, whether immediately or not, from a Spanish witness dating from 655. The derivation of the Longleat House fragment from a Spanish antecedent is intriguing, especially because some connections have been pointed out between, on the one hand, both these fragments and the St Gall ones, and, on the other hand, a family of manuscripts of the *Etymologiae* (designated as x) which has been claimed to derive directly from the final edition of the Isidorian encyclopaedia by Braulio of Saragossa.³¹⁵ If it really were the case that both the Longleat House and the St Gall fragments are textually close to this family, then there would be some basis to argue for an exceptionally early reception of the ultimate Spanish edition of the *Etymologiae* within Irish circles. However, it has also been argued that ζ is more likely to be a Carolingian edition of the *Etymologiae* than a direct offshoot of Braulio’s edition.³¹⁶

The Routes of Transmission of Isidore’s Texts to the British Isles

There are only four manuscripts containing Isidorian texts that can be dated with a good degree of certainty to the seventh century.³¹⁷ Of these four manuscripts, one was written in Spain (El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, R. II. 18, fols. 9–24, 33–8, 60–5, 67–82, s. vii and vii^{ex});³¹⁸ one, which is a papyrus codex and the earliest extant witness of the *Synonyma*, was apparently written in south France (St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 226, one leaf of which is now Zurich, Zentralbibliothek RP 5 + 6, s. vii²);³¹⁹ one (that is the St Gall fragments of the *Etymologiae*), either at Bobbio or some other Irish foundation on the continent;³²⁰ and finally the Longleat House fragment, which was written in an Irish scriptorium, probably in Ireland itself.³²¹ In addition, Beeson and Díaz y Díaz list another two manuscripts of supposed seventh-century origin, namely Milan, Biblioteca

Ambrosiana, C. 77 Sup. (S. P. 52), a Bobbio codex, and CCCC 304, a manuscript of arguably Spanish or French origin;³²² however, according to *CLA*, they should instead be dated to the eighth century.³²³ On the other hand, Lowe dates to the seventh century another three manuscripts containing Isidorian material; these are Autun, BM 27 (S. 29, fols. 16–62) + Paris, BN, nouv. acq. lat. 1629 (fols. 21–2), written in southern France or Spain;³²⁴ Münster, Staatsarchiv Msc. VII 2a, written in France;³²⁵ and Vatican City, BAV, lat. 5765, written at Bobbio.³²⁶

Finally, there are a number of Isidorian manuscripts dated between the end of the seventh and the mid-eighth century, the majority of which originated in France.³²⁷ In sum, according to this inventory, scanty though it may be, the earliest route for the transmission and dissemination of Isidore's texts seems to have been predominantly continental, with France and Bobbio being two crucial hubs.

A further early connection between France, Bobbio (or another unspecified north Italian centre frequented by Irish *peregrini*), and Isidore has emerged in a recent study and edition by Charles D. Wright and Roger Wright of two short Latin texts, namely a brief sermon entitled *De dies malus* [*sic*] and a *Joca monachorum* dialogue, contained, together with a commentary on the Gospels, in the first quire of ms. Paris, BN, lat. 13246, better known as the Bobbio Missal.³²⁸ Although its place of origin is still quite controversial,³²⁹ the Missal has lately been defined as 'a Gallican sacramentary with Irish elements' which was 'possibly' written in north Italy or in southeast France in the eighth century, although its contents, including the additions of the first quire, likely originated in the seventh century.³³⁰

It is worth pointing out that the *Joca monachorum* dialogue in particular reflects the blend of Gallican and Irish elements at the very core of the Bobbio Missal itself, since if the origin of the *Joca monachorum* as a genre has been located in southern France, on the other hand the most active agents of their transmission in the early Middle Ages were from the insular world.³³¹ As to the sermon *De dies malus*, besides the Bobbio Missal it is attested in a number of manuscripts which include texts and various material of Irish or Irish-influenced origin as well as Isidorian texts.³³² For example, two likely related, north Italian manuscript witnesses of

*De dies malus*³³³ contain, among other items, a copy of Isidore's *Etymologiae*,³³⁴ and a ninth-century manuscript of the Lake Constance region³³⁵ contains, alongside the sermon and a version of the *Joca monachorum* dialogue, a defective copy of the *Synonyma*.³³⁶ Also, one extract from *De dies malus* is included in chapter 31 of Isidore's *De natura rerum* in some late manuscripts.³³⁷ In particular, Charles D. Wright has pointed out a 'striking [textual] connection' between this addition to the Isidorian treatise and both the sermon and the *Joca monachorum* dialogue as they occur in the Bobbio Missal, concluding that the compiler of the addition to *De natura rerum* probably relied on a manuscript related to the lost exemplar from which the scribe of the Missal derived *De dies malus* and the *Joca monachorum* dialogue.³³⁸

In sum, the early date of the contents of the Bobbio Missal manuscript and its blend of Gallican and Irish elements as well as its Isidorian connections have significant implications for this discussion as they seem to support the argument that the early stages of transmission of Isidore's texts passed through a continental route via France involving Irish agents and foundations, such as Bobbio.³³⁹

Eventually, the combination of Irish lore and Isidorian texts in north Italy is also documented by a palimpsest, ms. St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 908, the upper script of which has been dated to the end of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth and which contains the unique copy of the Commentary on the Creation and Fall, an item in Bischoff's inventory,³⁴⁰ alongside a number of texts of apocryphal content, three excerpts from the *Synonyma*,³⁴¹ and one from the *Sententiae*.³⁴² According to Charles D. Wright, this collection 'as a whole [reasonably] took shape in a centre of insular cultural influence,' and it has been argued that such a centre should be located in the Milan region.³⁴³

As we have seen, Fontaine has suggested that the most likely route of transmission to the British Isles of *De natura rerum* was a continental one, via Septimania and the Rhône valley, which probably involved Irish continental foundations.³⁴⁴ Beeson, in one of the most comprehensive studies of the transmission of Isidore's works, while stressing the role played by the Irish in their diffusion, also argued that France had been the centre of

dissemination of such texts, and that it was from France that, courtesy mostly of Irish monks, Isidore's works reached the different areas of the West.³⁴⁵ According to these two scholars, then, if France, on the one hand, played a pre-eminent role in the transmission of Isidore's works, the Irish, on the other, were the most zealous agents of their dissemination, and indeed they have been claimed to be the 'managing editors' of the *Etymologiae*.³⁴⁶

The crucial importance of France in the Christianization of Ireland was asserted by Zimmer as early as 1909. He argued that in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages Ireland was culturally indebted to western France more than to any other country, and that the basis of such intense cultural and religious connections was the wine trade dating back at least to the days of Agricola (AD 40–93).³⁴⁷ Zimmer's arguments were on the whole confirmed in the early 1980s by James, who particularly emphasized the role of the Loire region as the principal intermediary between France and Ireland.³⁴⁸ In turn, western France would have been connected to both Spain, especially Galicia, and Ireland by sea routes, and it would therefore have been by such a route rather than via Septimania that Isidore's texts would have reached Ireland.³⁴⁹

Other scholars have instead advocated an early and direct transmission of Isidorian works from Spain to Ireland.³⁵⁰ In particular, Hillgarth has argued that the nexus of Mediterranean and Atlantic sea routes, used from remote antiquity to connect the Near East to western Europe through North Africa and Spain, was still open in the early Middle Ages.³⁵¹ Visigothic Spain and Ireland would then have been connected by means of a direct sea route, and Galicia, in particular, allegedly represented the main bridge between the Iberian peninsula and Ireland.³⁵² The existence of a Celtic see, namely *Britonia*, is attested in Galicia from the late sixth century onwards, and its foundation could even have taken place in the fifth. It seems reasonable that as a Celtic monastery, probably of Brittonic descent, *Britonia* may have played the role of intermediary not only with Brittany but also with the insular Celtic world.³⁵³

It may be noted in passing that Fontaine too has considered a possible Brittonic mediation in the transmission of *De natura rerum* from Spain to the British Isles.³⁵⁴ Also, British colonies had been established in Galicia since the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Roman

Britannia and were linked to the motherland by sea-routes, although such a path of transmission for the Isidorian treatise is 'peu vraisemblable.'³⁵⁵ The British colonies and monastic foundations in Galicia and Brittany, on the one hand, and the British Isles, on the other, would all have been part of what Mayr-Harting has called 'the whole Celtic thalassocracy on the Atlantic sea about the sixth and seventh centuries [within which contacts] were very intense.'³⁵⁶ Dumville, however, has challenged the very concept of 'Celtic thalassocracy' in the early Middle Ages,³⁵⁷ and has cautioned that while that period 'is for Brittany a very obscure era indeed,'³⁵⁸ close cultural exchanges between Brittany and Anglo-Saxon England can be dated only from the end of the ninth century as part of King Alfred's program of revival of learning and restocking of libraries as well as, eventually, as a result of Viking raids in Brittany.³⁵⁹

In an article of 1973 about the diffusion and use of biblical apocrypha in early medieval Ireland, Dumville argued that Spain played a pre-eminent role in the development of an Irish Christian civilization.³⁶⁰ In particular he claimed that it was from Spain that a number of biblical apocrypha reached Ireland.³⁶¹ (Indeed, subsequent scholarship has ascertained that early medieval Ireland proved an extraordinarily fertile ground for the reception and further elaboration of apocryphal literature, especially of eschatological content.)³⁶² Because of particularly favourable political and cultural circumstances, Spain was the only country in the West that was experiencing a phase of striking cultural growth from the end of the sixth century, and so the most likely to have given a momentous contribution to Irish Christianity, while the influence of the British Church, fundamental in the original conversion of Ireland, was declining.³⁶³

Evidence for the reverse context, that is influence of Irish Christian lore in Visigothic Spain, is provided by two flyleaves of a twelfth-century codex, ms. Paris, BN, lat. 536. The flyleaves in question contain a fragment of a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew that Bischoff had suggested to be Irish.³⁶⁴ This fragment is written in Visigothic script by a scribe who knew and followed the main Visigothic rules, although the influence of the insular usage is clearly detectable and was probably taken over from his exemplar. The flyleaves are, however, quite late, since they can be

‘hardly as old as the eighth century.’³⁶⁵

The apocryphal texts discussed by Dumville seem to have ultimately emanated from the east, and in this respect Dumville fully supported the view of Spain as the main intermediary between the east and Ireland and that chiefly ‘by means of the still open Atlantic sea-route.’³⁶⁶ Indeed, the debate on the alleged direct links between Spain and Ireland is largely parallel to the one, popular in particular among art historians, about eastern influences on Irish Christian culture and art.³⁶⁷ The alleged similarities between Copto-Syrian and Irish art range from the use of decorative motifs such as interlacing strands or lines of dots, especially in metalwork, to the use of red and yellow in enamels or in the illumination of manuscripts, especially the carpet page. Such analogues were, however, dismissed as mere ‘assumptions’ by Raftery in 1965.³⁶⁸ In the wake of Raftery’s study other scholars have agreed in rejecting claims of *direct* Coptic, or in general eastern, influence on early Irish Christian art, but have argued in favour of western intermediaries, again whether from Spain³⁶⁹ or France.³⁷⁰ Equally, archaeological findings of eastern Mediterranean pottery and coins have been differently interpreted either for or against the mediating role of Spain³⁷¹ and France.³⁷²

Within the British Isles, in turn, it has been debated whether Anglo-Saxon England received Isidore’s works from Ireland or from the continent, with France being the most commonly urged candidate. On this point too, the debate has become polarized around the positions of those, like Hillgarth,³⁷³ who championed the role of the Irish as the principal agents of diffusion of Isidorian scholarship in England, and those, like James and Mayr-Harting, who instead have stressed the debt of England to France and have pointed out that ‘the Irish were not indispensable to introduce the Anglo-Saxons to Isidore’s writings.’³⁷⁴ In his preliminary map of the circulation of the earliest witnesses of the *Etymologiae*, Reydellet does not include the Irish branch of the transmission, but suggests that Anglo-Saxon England received this text from north France and, in turn, re-exported it into the same area of the continent.³⁷⁵ Indeed, in the case of the *Synonyma*, it has been argued that at least one of the two extant recensions of the text reached Anglo-Saxon England *directly* from Spain by the end of the seventh century, while the other recension followed instead a

continental route through Septimania and France.³⁷⁶

Be that as it may, what is most relevant to stress at the end of this survey is that a number of Isidorian texts, including the *Synonyma*, were already known in Ireland 650 × 665.³⁷⁷ As for Anglo-Saxon England, the evidence for the knowledge of Isidore's works is a little later and perhaps less abundant, but mainly thanks to the evidence provided by both the Canterbury Biblical Commentaries and the Leiden corpus of glosses, as well as by Aldhelm, it can be said that by the beginning of the eighth century, at least the *Etymologiae*, *De natura rerum*, the *Synonyma*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, and *De differentiis uerborum* as well as the dubious *Liber numerorum* were known to the Anglo-Saxons.³⁷⁸

The question whether Isidore's texts reached Ireland directly from Spain or via France, and whether, in their turn, the Anglo-Saxons received them through the Irish or, as Fontaine has argued concerning the transmission of *De natura rerum* and the *Etymologiae*,³⁷⁹ from north France via Septimania and the Rhône valley, admittedly remains open. Evidence on this regard is often incomplete or inconclusive, and it is hoped that the long-awaited critical editions of a number of Isidorian works as well as further research in other fields, such as archaeology, will bring in new data. The debate on this subject has also been marred by blatant attempts to assert a hypothesis to the exclusion of equally plausible alternatives. As even one of the most resolute participants conceded, the debate concerning the routes by which Isidore's works reached the British Isles 'has been blown up out of proportion' and this has been 'due to an anachronistic perception of the seventh century'³⁸⁰ which has probably done no justice to the age and to the scope of the cultural contacts and exchanges its contemporaries were able to establish. As Davies has pointed out in her study of the sources of the *Hibernensis*, 'comparison of ... the citations of the Isidorian source-texts indicates that the compilers of the *Collectio canonum hibernensis* ultimately had access to a variety of manuscript families of the sources, demonstrating the wealth of the material available in early Irish monastic libraries.'³⁸¹ The study of the manuscript families of the sources of the *Hibernensis* has also given a complex picture of the 'cultural routes that linked Spain, France, Italy, Anglo-Saxon England and

Ireland.’³⁸² Likewise, the dissemination of the two recensions of the *Synonyma* as envisaged by their modern editor shows that the transmission of the Isidorian text to the British Isles probably implied more than one route or one group of mediators.³⁸³ In this regard, it is worth remembering that Isidore’s works often circulated in multiple recensions,³⁸⁴ and this circumstance often implied multiple branches of transmission and a variety of routes. Finally, as the case of the Bobbio Missal or of *De natura rerum* shows, ‘continental’ and ‘insular’ should not necessarily be read as mutually exclusive terms, since insular agents of transmission were active also on the continent, and insular foundations on the continent, such as firstly Bobbio, were undoubtedly centres where Isidore’s texts were well known and zealously copied from very early on.³⁸⁵

The Anglo-Saxon Manuscript Tradition of the *Synonyma*

According to Gneuss’s *Handlist*, there are eight witnesses of the *Synonyma* from Anglo-Saxon times, as shown in the table below.³⁸⁶

Classmark	Date	Origin	Provenance
St Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, Q. v. I. 15	viii ¹	SW England	Corbie (s. viii) ³⁸⁷
Würzburg, Universitäts- bibliothek, M. p. th. f. 79	viii ¹	S England or Mercia	Germany (s. viii ^{ex}) ³⁸⁸
London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D. xiv (fols. 170–224)	ix ^{1/4}	N or NE France	<i>ante</i> 912 S England (after 1100 Canterbury, Christ Church?) ³⁸⁹
CCCC 448 (fols. 1–86)	x ¹ or x ^{med}	S England (Worcester?)	after 1100 Winchester ³⁹⁰
London, BL, Harley 110 (fols. 3–53)	x ^{ex}	Canterbury, Christ Church ³⁹¹	
Salisbury, Cathedral Library 173	x ^{ex}	Continent	England (after 1100 prob. Salisbury) ³⁹²
London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A.iii	xi ^{med}	Canterbury, Christ Church ³⁹³	
London, BL, Royal 5. E. xix	xi ^{ex}	Salisbury ³⁹⁴	

As can be seen, at least two of these eight witnesses, namely the St Petersburg and Würzburg manuscripts, date to the first half of the eighth century; indeed the St Petersburg codex could well date as early as before 718,³⁹⁵ thereby following by just a century the publication of the *Synonyma*.³⁹⁶ Both codices have been collated for the new critical edition of the Isidorian text by Elfassi, and both are the earliest representatives of recension L.³⁹⁷ Alongside *Synonyma* I–II, 33, the St Petersburg manuscript contains other Isidorian texts such as the *Prooemia*,³⁹⁸ *De ortu et obitu patrum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, and *De differentiis rerum*, as well as wisdom texts, such as Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and their respective solutions, poems on the zodiac and the winds,³⁹⁹ and Jerome's *Epistola liii*.⁴⁰⁰ Two short texts preceding the *Synonyma* are particularly noteworthy as they seem to have been copied down by Boniface himself.⁴⁰¹

The St Petersburg manuscript attests to two crucial aspects of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of the *Synonyma*. On the one hand, the presence of Aldhelm's *Enigmata* in it is worth emphasizing, since Aldhelm is the earliest witness to the knowledge of the *Synonyma*

in Anglo-Saxon England.⁴⁰² On the other, the St Petersburg codex has important connections with the area of the Anglo-Saxon missions on the continent and can be associated with Boniface himself.⁴⁰³ Such a connection with the Anglo-Saxon missionaries also pertains to the Würzburg manuscript, which contains the *Synonyma* alone. This codex is indeed the earliest of a group of witnesses of the Isidorian text associated with the insular foundation of Würzburg.⁴⁰⁴

The Vespasian manuscript has also been collated for the new critical edition of the *Synonyma*, but, unlike the St Petersburg and the Würzburg manuscripts, it attests to recension F, and the fact that both recensions were circulating in Anglo-Saxon England is another significant piece of evidence adding to the rather vast and varied tradition of the *Synonyma* in pre-Conquest England.⁴⁰⁵ Besides the *Synonyma*, the Vespasian manuscript contains texts of theological, liturgical, and moral content, such as creeds, hymns, and Pelagius's *Expositio fidei catholicae*. At the beginning of the tenth century, extracts from Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae* were added, a text which can be said to have a core of inspiration similar to that of the *Synonyma*.⁴⁰⁶ Eventually, our codex was bound with a later one containing an Old English version of the first sixteen chapters of Alcuin's *Liber uirtutibus et uitiiis*, another *florilegium* drawing on the *Synonyma*.⁴⁰⁷

CCCC 448 and Harley 110 can be discussed jointly. Both manuscripts contain, besides the *Synonyma*, two texts by Prosper of Aquitaine, namely the *Epigrammata* and the *Versus ad coniugem*, and in both codices the text of the *Synonyma* has been glossed: in Latin and Old English in Harley 110, in Latin only in CCCC 448. The two manuscripts have been associated on the basis of the striking similarities in their content and glosses as well as in their layout and capitalization, and it has been concluded that they must represent a common strand within the manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma*, probably deriving from the same glossed exemplar of the Isidorian text. In particular, the occurrence of Prosper's *Epigrammata*, which was one of the curriculum texts in Anglo-Saxon schools, and the very nature of the glosses in both manuscripts seem to point to a didactic context.⁴⁰⁸

Besides the Vespasian manuscript, the Salisbury codex is the only Anglo-Saxon witness of the *Synonyma* of continental origin.

This manuscript arrived in England before 1066 and then probably reached Salisbury after the Conquest. As well as the *Synonyma*, the Salisbury manuscript also contains a text which the Isidorian work was often associated with, if not mistaken for, in the Middle Ages, namely Augustine's *Soliloquia*.⁴⁰⁹ The contents as well as the size of this codex ($7\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{8}$ inches) suggest that it may have been meant for private devotional reading.

Finally, ms. Royal 5. E. xix can be described as a homiletic codex since, besides the *Synonyma*, it contains fourteen homilies, twelve of which derive from the Homiliary of Saint-Père of Chartres,⁴¹⁰ as well as two commentaries on *Canticum canticorum*, one by Alcuin and the other anonymous.

The manuscripts discussed above include the Isidorian Latin text in its entirety, apart from the St Petersburg codex, which contains *Synonyma* I–II, 33, and the Würzburg manuscript, where, however, little more than the last paragraph of the PL edition of the *Synonyma* is missing due to the loss of a folio.⁴¹¹ An important exception is ms. Tiberius A. iii, since it contains an Old English version of *Synonyma* II, 88–96.⁴¹² This excerpt is a major piece of evidence for the study of the vernacularization of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England, all the more so since it includes the passage of the *Synonyma* best known and most often drawn on by the Anglo-Saxons, the *ubi sunt* passage.⁴¹³ Furthermore, the Tiberius manuscript seems to link the *Synonyma* with the Benedictine Reform, since this miscellaneous codex contains some of the fundamental texts of the Benedictine movement in late Anglo-Saxon England.⁴¹⁴ Such a collection seems to have belonged to or been assembled by a late representative of the Benedictine Reform, namely Ælfric Bata, who owes his fame to a set of scholastic *colloquia* in which he draws on the *Synonyma* among other sources.⁴¹⁵

In four of these eight manuscripts, that is CCCC 448, the Würzburg manuscript, Cotton Vespasian D. xiv, and Harley 110, the text of the *Synonyma* has been glossed, and the latter three codices also feature Old English glosses, although the vernacular glosses in the three manuscripts are unrelated.⁴¹⁶ These Old English *interpretamenta* often occur in the same portion of the text of the *Synonyma*, but they all refer to different Latin lemmata, with only two exceptions. Two Latin words, namely *ablata* (*Synonyma* I,

7) and *compedibus* (*Synonyma* I, 16), have been glossed in both the Würzburg and the Vespasian manuscripts, albeit differently, since the Würzburg glossators translated them as *ginoman* and *bendum* respectively,⁴¹⁷ while the Vespasian glossator(s) translated them as *onweg* and *mid cospum*.⁴¹⁸ Analysis of the vernacular glosses to the *Synonyma* fails to connect the Old English glosses to the Isidorian text and the Leiden corpus of glosses.⁴¹⁹

Five out of eight Anglo-Saxon manuscript witnesses of the *Synonyma* date to the late Anglo-Saxon period, that is, from the beginning of the tenth to the end of the eleventh century. However, as we have seen, there are also two early eighth-century codices (the St Petersburg and Würzburg manuscripts); there is also one ninth-century manuscript, the Vespasian codex, but this is of continental origin and reached England before 912. The ninth century, then, characteristically represents a gap in the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma*. Nonetheless evidence for the knowledge of the Isidorian text even in that century is provided by the famous prayer collection in the *Book of Cerne*,⁴²⁰ and, possibly, by a charter issued by Wiglaf, king of the Mercians, in 836, in which he grants a privilege for the lands of the monastery of Hanbury, near Worcester.⁴²¹ In the concluding, devotional lines of this charter, where the king expresses his hope that the privilege he is granting to the monastery may cleanse him from his sins, a quotation from an unspecified source occurs which reads: 'peccatum ibi emenda ubi nascitur' [amend sin there where it is born]. Such a phrase echoes one in *Synonyma* II, 7, 'culpam ibi emenda ubi nascitur' [amend guilt there where it is born].⁴²² Of course, the selection of just one phrase, especially of a phrase of gnomic character like the one in question, renders the identification of a specific direct source problematic, since it could easily have been excerpted from a wide range of intermediate sources, such as *florilegia*, commonplace books, or liturgical texts. The *Synonyma* were indeed a source for all these kinds of compilations;⁴²³ nevertheless, it is significant that the Isidorian text even if at one or more removes seems to have been present in the mind of the cleric who drew up this charter in early ninth-century Mercia.

The vitality of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma* is also attested on the continent, since the Anglo-Saxon

missionaries seem to have eagerly promoted the diffusion of the Isidorian text in their continental foundations. As already mentioned, the Würzburg and the St Petersburg manuscripts are both connected with the activity of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries on the continent. The former is a south English or Mercian codex that reached Germany by the end of the eighth century. Once on the continent, a number of Old High German glosses were entered in the early ninth century in a hybrid minuscule which has been classified as ‘nachbonifatianisch’ and ‘deutsch-insular’ from the Rhône-Main area.⁴²⁴ The St Petersburg manuscript too is a south English manuscript that reached the insular foundation of Corbie by the middle of the eighth century. Indeed, according to Dobiaš-Roždestvenskaja and Bakhtine, this manuscript was written at Corbie by Anglo-Saxon scribes.⁴²⁵ (In fact, at least some of the contents – such as the poems on the zodiac and the winds⁴²⁶ – were added at Corbie, and parts of the *Synonyma* were continued there as well.)⁴²⁷ A similar suggestion with regard to the Würzburg manuscript has been put forward by McKitterick, who has claimed that the latter codex was likely written in England but could just as well have been written on the continent by Anglo-Saxon scribes.⁴²⁸ What is more, it has been argued that one of the hands at work on the St Petersburg codex was that of Boniface himself, whose handwriting has been detected in the copy of the ‘Athanasian creed’ (incipit: *Quicumque uult*) on fol. 63r,⁴²⁹ and of an erudite acrostic poem on St John (incipit: *Iohannis celsi rimans mysteria caeli*)⁴³⁰ which immediately precedes the *Synonyma* in the manuscript and of which Boniface could well have been the author too.⁴³¹

Another six witnesses of the *Synonyma* should be discussed because they are associated with Anglo-Saxon foundations on the continent:

- 1 Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek S. 8, or *Codex Bonifatianus* 2 (s. viii¹; *CLA* VIII, 1197)
- 2 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. q. 28a, fols. 1r–36v (s. viii/ix; *CLA* IX, 1435)
- 3 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. q. 28b, fols. 43r–64v (s. viii/ix; *CLA* IX, 1437)
- 4 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. f. 33, fols. 16r–

37r and 56r–7r (833 × 842)

5 New York, Columbia UL, Plimpton 129 + New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 559 (s. viii/ix; *CLA* XI, 1655)

6 Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, F. III. 15c, fols. 1r–27v (s. viii²; *CLA* VII, 845)⁴³²

According to tradition, the first item was the very book used by Boniface to defend himself when he was stabbed to death in Friesland in 754 (the manuscript still shows ‘two violent incisions in the upper and lower margins’).⁴³³ This manuscript is also known as *Ragyndrudis Codex* from the name of the still unidentified lady who ordered the book to be made. An entry with her name in French uncial of the first half of the eighth century is now on fol. 143v and according to Lowe she probably is that *Raegenthryth filia Athuolfi* whom Bishop Lull mentions in one of his letters as a wealthy benefactor of the churches in the Mainz area.⁴³⁴ Eventually, the manuscript came into the possession of a certain Aodulf, whose name was entered in eighth-century Anglo-Saxon script on the title page (fol. 2v), and who Hofmann thinks may have been a younger relative of Ragyndrudis.⁴³⁵

Codex Bonifatianus 2 is a continental manuscript, which was written in Luxeuil minuscule in the first half of the eighth century, but it features corrections and Old English dry-point glosses in eighth-century Anglo-Saxon minuscule (unfortunately the very few glosses to the *Synonyma* which it has been possible to decipher are not related to the ones in the other three Anglo-Saxon witnesses glossed in the vernacular).⁴³⁶ McKitterick and Haseloff have pointed out that the Luxeuil minuscule of *Codex Bonifatianus* 2 betrays ‘insular symptoms.’⁴³⁷ These have been explained as the hybrid result of cooperation or mutual influence between an insular scribe and a continental one trained at Luxeuil. The scriptorium where these two hypothetical scribes could have worked side by side has been suggested to be Corbie, which, after the sack of Luxeuil in 732, would have been one ‘obvious haven for the refugees from Luxeuil.’⁴³⁸ It may be worth remembering that the St Petersburg manuscript of the *Synonyma* is associated with both Boniface and Corbie; although for *Codex Bonifatianus* 2 ‘the Corbie-Boniface connection ... cannot be substantiated, the other strong possibilities are at least unanimous in the link

between this codex and Boniface.⁴³⁹ Finally, it is noteworthy that *Codex Bonifatianus* 2, together with the papyrus codex 226 from St Gall (s. vii²),⁴⁴⁰ and a French manuscript, namely Paris, BN, lat. 14086, is one of the oldest witnesses of the F recension. Interestingly, therefore, some of the earliest witnesses of both recensions of the *Synonyma* are either of definite Anglo-Saxon origin, such as the St Petersburg and the Würzburg manuscripts for the L recension, or have strong Anglo-Saxon connections, such as *Codex Bonifatianus* 2 for the Φ recension.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Paris, BN, lat. 14086 too has a Corbie connection, since it was written in the first half of the eighth century, probably in Moûtiers-Saint Jean, but was eventually moved to Saint-Germain-des-Prés and finally to Corbie.⁴⁴¹ There is yet another early, though fragmentary witness of the *Synonyma* associated with Corbie, namely Paris, BN, lat. 13396, which was written in north or northeast France around the year 800 and eventually reached Corbie by the mid-ninth century.⁴⁴² Corbie has also been shown to be the place of origin of the *Decretales pseudo-isidorianae*,⁴⁴³ a collection of mostly pseudepigraphal decrees by popes and councils which were put together around 834–5 and were eventually drawn on in the major canonical collections up to Gratian's *Decretum*.⁴⁴⁴ The compiler of the *Decretales* included at least three extracts from Book II of the *Synonyma*,⁴⁴⁵ and it has been shown that the exemplar of the Isidorian text on which he drew cannot have been the St Petersburg manuscript or either of the two Paris manuscripts.⁴⁴⁶ It can therefore be concluded that in the 830s yet another copy of the *Synonyma* must have been available in Corbie.

The other five manuscripts listed were all written between the second half of the eighth century and the first half of the ninth in an Anglo-Saxon centre on the continent, especially in the Würzburg area, or in Würzburg itself, thus confirming what Bischoff and Hofmann had suggested about the *Synonyma* being 'besonders [beliebt] in Würzburg.'⁴⁴⁷ In these continental foundations too both recensions of the *Synonyma* were attested, since the two Würzburg codices, M. p. th. q. 28a and M. p. th. f. 33, contain recension L of the text, while recension F is attested by manuscript M. p. th. q. 28b as well as by *Codex Bonifatianus* 2.⁴⁴⁸

Finally, although it has not physically come down to us, another codex can be considered to be part of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma*: the copy of the Isidorian text recorded in the list of books sent by Æthelwold to the monastery of Medehamstede, which Æthelwold himself had restored and endowed after the disruption of Viking raids.⁴⁴⁹

When discussing the continental witnesses of the *Synonyma*, attention should be called to the critical reassessment by McKitterick of the traditional view of insular centres on the continent. McKitterick has challenged Lowe's very definition of 'insular centres' or 'centres under insular influence' on the continent and has instead stressed the international character of communities such as Fulda or Würzburg, where 'the dominance of English culture ... in the eighth century ... is an illusion' and where the contribution of continental, especially Frankish, elements was highly significant.⁴⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the insular origin of and contributions to such scriptoria cannot be overlooked, and it seems to me that *Codex Bonifatianus* 2 and the other five continental manuscripts discussed above can also be considered to be part of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma*. Including the copy donated to Medehamstede, then, this tradition would amount to a total of fifteen witnesses, which is indeed a significant number if compared to the sixty-nine manuscripts of the *Synonyma* recorded by Díaz y Díaz which make up the overall tradition of the Isidorian text from the seventh to the twelfth century.⁴⁵¹ The figure is still more significant if we compare it with the thirty-eight manuscripts listed by Beeson that represent the non-Spanish manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma* up to the ninth century.⁴⁵² In addition, the abundance and the early date of at least part of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma* appear all the more remarkable if we take into account that 'patristic sources available in [Anglo-Saxon England] were generally quite limited' and that 'patristic scholarship was a restricted and difficult enterprise.'⁴⁵³

In conclusion, it seems that Anglo-Saxon libraries, whether in England or on the continent, were well stocked with copies of the *Synonyma*. This text presumably reached England by different routes. As has been argued, recension L apparently arrived in south England directly from Spain by the end of the seventh

century.⁴⁵⁴ Southwest England, on the other hand, received from Ireland, presumably as early as the middle of the seventh century, those computistical texts of Spanish and African origin that were to constitute the basis of Bede's computi.⁴⁵⁵ In this area was at least one prestigious centre of Irish scholarship, namely Malmesbury.⁴⁵⁶ Aldhelm, who was abbot of Malmesbury and whose links with Ireland and its scholars have already been discussed,⁴⁵⁷ knew the *Synonyma*, thus documenting the knowledge of the Isidorian text at a date even earlier than that of the St Petersburg manuscript. Finally, since the Vespasian manuscript – the earliest Anglo-Saxon witness of recension F of the *Synonyma* – originated in north France, a continental route of transmission must also be posited.

As to the presence of the *Synonyma* in Canterbury, the evidence in this regard is unfortunately rather late, and the first date of arrival there as well as the possible routes followed by our text to the Christian capital of England are a matter for speculation.⁴⁵⁸ All that can be said is that in the late Anglo-Saxon period, Canterbury libraries were supplied with copies of the *Synonyma*. At least two Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the *Synonyma* originated in Canterbury, namely the Harley and the Tiberius manuscripts.⁴⁵⁹ Also, the Vespasian manuscript – itself a continental manuscript – reached south England at the beginning of the tenth century, and after the Norman Conquest probably arrived in Christ Church, Canterbury.⁴⁶⁰ Last but not least, the text most extensively indebted to the *Synonyma* in the whole Old English corpus, namely homily xxii of the Vercelli Book, is contained in a manuscript which was very likely written in a southeastern scriptorium, most probably the one at St Augustine's, Canterbury, during Dunstan's pontificate (959–88).⁴⁶¹

Certainly, the fact that the Anglo-Saxon witnesses of the *Synonyma* attest to both recension Land F seems to suggest that the copies of the Isidorian text that reached Anglo-Saxon England were numerous and of different origin, thereby confirming the complexity and variety of book exchanges between England, Ireland, and different areas on the continent.⁴⁶² Finally, the very diverse contents of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the *Synonyma* also indirectly bear witness to the variety of uses the Anglo-Saxons made of this multifaceted text, ranging from the devotional to the

homiletic and the didactic.⁴⁶³

The following chapters will attempt to provide a survey of the diverse uses and adaptations of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England, focusing in particular on their vernacularization in the anonymous homiletic production. Since, as I mentioned above, Vercelli xxii is the Old English text most indebted to the *Synonyma*, this anonymous homily will be the starting point for my survey.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Vernacularization of the *Synonyma*: The Case of Vercelli xxii

The text known as homily xxii of the Vercelli Book has been described by its most recent editor as a ‘piece of spiritual contemplation modulating into homiletic injunction rather than ... a homily’ in the strict sense of a prose text expounding a pericope and intended for a specific date of the Christian calendar.¹ Vercelli xxii does not therefore seem to have been intended for liturgical use, and in this respect it is by no means an exception among the homiletic items of the Vercelli Book. Indeed, the Vercelli collection cannot be considered to be a homiliary in the conventional sense of a collection of homilies for the Christian year,² and its character is mainly penitential and devotional.³ However, in view of the increasingly blurred distinction between *sermo* and *homilia*, in the following discussion I will refer to the person responsible for the composition of Vercelli xxii as a homilist. Also, we do not know whether this ‘homilist’ was in fact a translator of a Latin piece or a compiler adapting a pre-existent Old English translation of the *Synonyma*.⁴

Vercelli xxii itself is a unique piece and was solely drawn from its exemplar.⁵ For more than two-thirds of its length (approximately lines 1–174) it relies on the *Synonyma*, in particular on paragraphs 5 to 50 of the first book and paragraphs 1 to 26 of the second book. The debt to the *Synonyma* was acknowledged as early as 1913 by the first editor of Vercelli xxii, Max Förster.⁶ He thought that the shift from paragraph 50 of the first book of the *Synonyma* to the beginning of the second book was probably due to the loss of a folio between fols. 118v and 119r,⁷ but such a loss is unlikely, since Vercelli xxii is a complete, coherent text as it stands. Förster’s set of parallel passages from the *Synonyma* occasionally differs from that of Scragg. In turn, Scragg’s selection has proved slightly conservative in some points, omitting

some phrases of the Isidorian source that must have been drawn on by the Anglo-Saxon homilist.⁸

There is no certainty whether the Anglo-Saxon homilist worked selectively from a complete copy of the *Synonyma* or drew on an epitome of it. Both complete copies of the Isidorian text and epitomes and excerpts of it circulated in Anglo-Saxon England.⁹ However, the selection from the *Synonyma* which underlies Vercelli xxii does not seem to coincide with any of the known epitomes of the Isidorian text, so if the Old English homily were really a translation from a Latin excerpt, it would then witness yet another recasting of the *Synonyma*. Szarmach has indeed suggested that the Old English writer was following ‘an intermediary source in a Latin redaction of [the *Synonyma*] rather than the *Synonyma* itself.’¹⁰ Our Isidorian text, then, would have found its way to the vernacular tradition as attested by Vercelli xxii through a Latin homiletic recasting, not unlike Alcuin’s *De uirtutibus et uitiiis*, a text which in Anglo-Saxon England was variously epitomized in both Latin and the vernacular.¹¹ Indeed, at least part of the Old English tradition of Alcuin’s text, as represented by Vercelli homily xx, can be traced via a Latin homiletic piece in Cambridge, Pembroke College 25.¹²

As we shall see, the results of the present study also point to a derivation of Vercelli xxii from a Latin intermediary source. Indeed, I have found that the Vercelli homily draws on another Latin source besides the *Synonyma*, namely the pseudepigraphical *Sermo 58 ad fratres in eremo*,¹³ for at least a brief paragraph (lines 123–8 of Scragg’s edition). This paragraph is placed between two lengthier sections both relying on the *Synonyma*, and this fact seems to rule out the possibility that the compiler of Vercelli xxii was drawing on an Old English translation of the Isidorian text.¹⁴ However, the question of the existence of an Old English version of the *Synonyma* is posed in similar – though not identical – terms also by at least one more important witness to the vernacularization of the *Synonyma*: the Tiberius epitome. The latter extract is a faithful translation of a limited section of the *Synonyma* consisting of the paragraphs containing the *ubi sunt* passage, and will be discussed in the following chapter.¹⁵

According to the most recent editor of the homily, Vercelli xxii is a

‘very literal’ translation into the vernacular of a Latin homiletic adaptation of the *Synonyma*.¹⁶ The extant Old English text would provide evidence of this Latin adaptation and subsequent translation into the vernacular of the Isidorian source at least twice: first, in line 153, the Old English text awkwardly reads *he mænð* [he means] in a Doomsday passage referring to God judging not only our deeds, but also our thoughts; secondly, in line 174, the Old English inappropriately reads *lufu* [love] in a context where a term for ‘fear’ would have been expected. Scragg has explained both those renderings as the results of two misreadings of the Latin text: in the first case *iudicat* [he judges] was apparently read as *indicat* [he means] and therefore translated into Old English as *he mænð*; in the second, *timor* [fear] was read as *amor* [love] and therefore translated as *lufu*.¹⁷ Scragg claims that such mistakes cannot be blamed on the Latin compiler, since his¹⁸ use of the Isidorian source shows him to be a confident Latinist and familiar with his source text; they must therefore have occurred in the process of copying the Latin exemplar and been blindly accepted by the Anglo-Saxon homilist.¹⁹ Recently, Szarmach has questioned Scragg’s conclusions, by showing that, for example, the transmission of words such as *amor* and *timor* has a complicated history in the manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma*.²⁰ I also tend to think that Scragg’s argument is perhaps worth reconsidering, because misreadings may occur irrespective of one’s proficiency in a given language, so even a competent Latin compiler could have made them; equally, they could perhaps be traced back to the copy of the *Synonyma* that he was using and he might have blindly accepted them. I think it safer to allow for such slips and, on the other hand, not to overestimate the Anglo-Saxon homilist’s competence in Latin. In fact, in at least one case he seems to have been unable to make sense of the Latin source and to have provided a very approximate, if not wholly wrong, translation. The point in question occurs in *Synonyma* I, 6: ‘conserta manu in me pericula ingerunt’ [holding hands they hurl dangers at me], which is rendered into Old English as ‘hie sendað hire handa on me’ [They place their hands on me].²¹ It may be that the exemplar of the *Synonyma* on which the Vercelli translation is ultimately based might have provided a corrupt reading in this particular clause. However, at least five of the seven surviving pre-Conquest manuscripts of the *Synonyma*

provide correct readings,²² and from their evidence it does not seem that the clause in question was a particularly troubling point in the transmission of the text.²³

The translation from the *Synonyma* is often verbally close, as, for example, at the very beginning of the homily (lines 2–4), which echoes literally the introduction of the Isidorian work:

Min sawl on nearunesse is geseted 7 min gast me hatað 7
min heorte is gedrefedu²⁴ 7 mines modes nearunesse me
nætt.

[My soul is set in anxiety and my spirit hates me, and my heart is troubled, and my mind's anxiety afflicts me.]

The corresponding passage from *Synonyma* I, 5 reads:

Anima mea in angustiis est, spiritus meus aestuat, cor
meum fluctuat, angustia animi possidet me. Angustia
animi affligit me[.]

[My soul is in anxiety, my spirit is troubled, my heart is
seething, my mind's anxiety possesses me. My mind's
anxiety afflicts me.]

Here the Anglo-Saxon homilist closely follows the Latin source, especially as far as the translation of nouns is concerned.²⁵ The obsessive self-centredness of the Latin is also faithfully translated, all the more so given that in the Old English version *mod* – the equivalent of the Latin *animus* – is also modified by the possessive adjective (*mines modes*) like the other nouns of the sequence, while its Latin antecedent is not. However, even in cases where the Latin source is translated literally, the sequence of the source phrases is often altered in the Old English version, as happens, for example, in lines 7–9:

For ðan þe swa hwyder swa ic fare, min ungesælignesne
me færð mid, 7 min yfel ic nahwær befeon ne mæg, þa ic
ær ne wolde. Swa hwyder swa ic me hwyrfe, hie me
samod siðiað.

[For, wherever I travel, my misfortune travels with me, and I can nowhere flee my evil, which I previously did not wish (to flee). Wherever I turn myself, they journey together with me.]

The main source of this passage is the beginning of *Synonyma* I, 6:

Ubicunque fugio, mala mea me insequuntur; ubicunque me conuertero malorum meorum me umbra comitatur; uelut umbram corporis, sic mala mea fugere non possum.

[Wherever I run, my evils follow (me); wherever I shall have turned myself, the shadow of my evils accompanies me; like my body's shadow, I cannot flee my evils.]

Comparison between the two passages clearly shows that the order of the Latin *commata* has been altered, because in the Old English passage the equivalent of the final clause in the Latin text has been moved after the second clause. It might also be worth noting in passing that in this case the Anglo-Saxon homilist is more 'synonymical' than Isidore himself. Indeed, while in the Latin, the noun phrase *mala mea* is repeated in all of the three sentences making up the passage, the Old English equivalent *min yfel* occurs only once, in a central position, where it is preceded by the synonymous phrase *min ungesælnesse* and followed by the pronoun *hie*.

One can also consider the following passage from *Synonyma* I, 9:

Iusti egent, iniqui honorantur, iusti despiciuntur, iniqui laetantur, iusti in moerore et luctu sunt. Impius praeualet aduersus iustum[.]

[The righteous are destitute, the unrighteous are honoured, the righteous are despised, the unrighteous rejoice, the righteous are in sadness and mourning. The impious prevails over the righteous.]

As can be seen, the six *commata* of the Latin have been expanded,

reshuffled, and rearranged in the Old English text (lines 27–33), although their single elements have been translated quite closely:

þa godan wædliþ on þysse worulde 7 þa manfullan
gehyhtaþ. þa manfullan wealdaþ nu on heora rice 7
hynað þa godan. Ða unrihtan synt geweorðode nu 7 þa
soðfæstan aweorpene. þa unrihtan blissiað 7 þa soðfæstan
synt on gnornunge 7 on heafe. 7 se arleasa gæð nu
beforan þam soðfæstan 7 se yfla wylt þam soðfæstan þam
godum, þa unscyldigan beoð witnode, 7 þa scyldigan
beoð forlætene.

[The good are destitute in this world, and the wicked
rejoice. The wicked rule now in their realm and oppress
the good. The unrighteous are now honoured, and the
faithful are cast out. The unrighteous exult, and the
faithful are in sadness and in lamentation. And the
impious go now before the faithful, and the evil have the
power over the faithful and the good. And the innocent
are punished and the guilty are pardoned.]

The string of Latin *commata* has been gathered into five sentences, and the clauses within them have been linked by the conjunction *and* rather than asyndetically. The first four sentences in the Old English passage are each made up by two clauses arranged as a contrasting pair (which is particularly evident in the first two sentences, since they are arranged so as to form a chiasmus). The last sentence, in contrast, consists of four clauses (and is thus twice as long as the others) building up a climactic sequence, made even more intense by the anaphora of *and*. The whole passage is given tight cohesion by the internal echoic repetitions (*þa soðfæstan* occurs three times, *þa godan* occurs twice as do *þa manfullan*, *þa unrihtan*, *wealdan*, *synt*, and *beoð*), and by aural effects such as homoeoteleuton (all the substantivated adjectives end in *-an*) and assonance (*wædliþ–gehyhtaþ–wealdaþ–hynað*). All these rhetorical devices together single out this passage as a unit of special importance, conveying the inherent injustice of this world's social order, which, as the homily goes on, is to be subverted by the advent of Doomsday. In the whole passage we are constantly reminded that this shameful state of things refers to the *hic et nunc*

(the phrase *on þysse worulde* opens the passage, and the adverb *nu* subsequently occurs three times), whereby a world which is beyond this one in both space and time is implied. As will be shown, the constant dialectic between this world and the next is one of the crucial features and structural devices of Vercelli xxii, as well as an original contribution of the Anglo-Saxon homilist largely unparalleled in the Latin source.²⁶

Often the Anglo-Saxon homilist worked extremely selectively, singling out at times a few individual phrases from the Latin text, or succinctly summarizing whole paragraphs of the Latin source with new wording. One can consider, for example, the following series of *commata* from *Synonyma* I, 5:

circumseptus aerumnis, circumclusus aduersis, obsitus
miseriis, opertus infelicitate, oppressus angustiiis.

[encircled by afflictions, enclosed by adversities, filled
with miseries, covered with unhappiness, oppressed by
anxieties.]

The Anglo-Saxon homilist selected only one *comma*, the fourth, which he translated as ‘eallre unsælignesse ic eom bewrigen’ [I am covered with every misfortune] (lines 4–5). Similarly, the fifth paragraph of the homily (lines 67–105) draws on a long section of the *Synonyma* (I, 26–36), but conflates much of the source material. In this paragraph, two of the main concepts of the homily are explained, that is, the transitory character of this life’s sorrows as opposed to the eternal sorrow of the hellish torments, and the fact that the misery of this life is assigned by God and is a prerequisite of repentance and avoidance of eternal punishment. All the main concepts expressed in this passage are found in the Latin source, although there they are scattered and diluted. The Anglo-Saxon homilist has picked up and translated literally individual key phrases,²⁷ mingling them with freer renderings or his own original insertions and moulding them all into a coherent whole.

Original elements of the new creation include rhetorical devices typical of the vernacular. As I hope to show in the following discussion, aural effects, such as assonance and alliteration, are

present throughout Vercelli xxii but are evident in particular in doublets of significant words, such as *leohtlic* [light] and *leaslic* [false] (line 130), *forwyrðan* [to perish] and *forwisnan* [to decay] (lines 177–8), conveying crucial concepts of the homily, such as the fleeting and illusory nature of this world, or the inherently corrupting power of earthly possessions. Equally widespread is the use of echoic repetition of key words, to which the structure of Vercelli xxii owes much of its cohesion. It seems possible to single out several semantic fields, some of which are represented throughout the text. The largest of these semantic fields seems to be that conveying the concept of affliction, in particular that affliction which is a consequence of punishment. Abundantly scattered through the text are words such as *ungesælignes*, and the cognate adverb *ungesæliglice* and adjective *ungesælig*; *gnornung* and *gnornigan*; *wite* and *witan*; *cwellere* and *cwelman*; *tintreg(a)* and *tintregian*; *ðrowung* and *ðrowian*; *(ge)win* and *(ge)winnan*; *heaf* and *heofian*; *hreow* and the compounded forms *wælhreow* and *wælhreowlic*; *(ge)nætan*, *swincan*, *gedrefan*.²⁸ They are especially concentrated in the first half of the homily, amounting to forty-one occurrences in total up to line 105. The abundance of words relating to affliction in the first section of Vercelli xxii is not surprising, since this part of the homily is devoted to a sombre meditation on the suffering and torments inflicted on the sinful soul and body. Interestingly, the same words used to convey the eternal punishment to be inflicted on those who are now rich and powerful are also used to describe the afflictions suffered by those who are righteous but needy in this world, and precisely because of their suffering on this earthly life will earn the eternal reward. I quote lines 30–4:

Þa unrihtan blissiað ⁊ þa soðfæstan synt on **gnornunge** ⁊
on **heafe**. ⁊ se arleasa gæð nu beforan þam soðfæstan ⁊
se yfla wylt þam soðfæstan ⁊ þam godum, ⁊ þa
unscyldigan beoð **witnode**, ⁊ þa scyldigan beoð
forlætene. For þyllicum synnum ⁊ oðrum beoð þa sawla
witnode on Godes gesyhðe[.]²⁹

These lexical correspondences effectively convey that inverse proportion which is a fundamental principle of Christian ethics and eschatology, and which is stated very clearly elsewhere in the

homily.³⁰

In the second half of the homily, by contrast, I count only sixteen occurrences of words from the relevant semantic field, and a good seven of these sixteen are concentrated in the final exhortation of the homily (lines 209–15), so encircling it within a cohesive frame of echoic repetitions.³¹ I quote the opening lines of the homily, highlighting the words belonging to the semantic field concerning affliction in bold (lines 2–5):

Min sawl on nearunesse is geseted ⁊ min gast me hatað ⁊
min heorte is **gedrefedu** ⁊ mines modes nearunesse me
nætt. ‘Eallum yflum ic eom seald,’ cwæð seo synfulle
sawl, ‘ ⁊ eallre **ungesælignesse** ic eom bewrigen.’

[My soul is set in anxiety, and my spirit hates me, and my heart is troubled, and my mind’s anxiety afflicts me. ‘I am given up to all evils,’ said the sinful soul, and ‘I am covered with every misfortune.’]

All three highlighted words recur in the text: *(ge)nætan*, *ungesælignes*, and cognate words recur more than once,³² while *(ge)drefan* occurs only once more. This other occurrence of *(ge)drefan* is significantly found towards the end of the homily (lines 178–9), in a sentence where the repeated occurrence of words conveying suffering and hardship confirms that these are inescapable components of human life, even though man was created by God in his likeness:

God þone mannan to his anlicnesse geworhte, ⁊ þonne
hwæðere idellice he **swincð** ⁊ on **gewinne** he bið
drefed.

[God created man in his likeness, and still, nevertheless, vainly he toils and in hardship he is afflicted.]

Even more striking is the concentration of such words in lines 42–5:

Ac þa **cwelleras** unoflinnedlice **cwelmað**, ⁊ hie
unaseccgendlice **gnornunge** hire **wite** mænað, for þan þe

ða deoflu swa hwæt swa hie magon **wælhreowlices** hie
þencap be hire 7 doð. 7 þusendfealdum **witum** hie hie
tintregiað 7 slitað[.]

[But the executioners will torment (her, i.e., the soul)
unceasingly, and she will express with sorrow her
unspeakable punishment, because the devils (carry out)
whatever act of cruelty they may think and do to her.
And with thousand-fold tortures they will torture and
wound her.]

Apart from echoic repetitions (such as the polyptoton *cwelleras-cwelmað*, *wite-witum*), as well as aural effects (such as the homoeoteleuton in *unoflinnedlice* and *unaseccgendlice*), this passage is noteworthy because words such as *cwelman*, *gnorning*, *wite*, and *tintregian* occur repeatedly in the rest of the text. By contrast, *wælhreowlic* occurs only in the passage quoted above; but it is interesting to note that the cognate adjective *wælhreow* occurs at the end of the homily (line 213),³³ and the uncompounded noun *hreow* is found in close proximity (line 214). Equally, *(ge)winne*, which occurs uniquely in line 179, quoted above, is echoed at the end of the homily (line 209) by the cognate verb *winnan*. I quote the closing lines of the homily (lines 209–15) in full to show the envelope pattern accomplished by the Anglo-Saxon homilist:³⁴

7 utan **winnan** on þyssum lænan life þe læs we **þrowien**
eft þa ecan **tintrego**. Þeos tid is sceort 7 sio is mycel 7
ungeendod. For ðan þæt is se wyrresta dæg se nænigne
onlyst. Þær bið soht fram anra gehwylcum hwæt he
yfeles gedyde oðþe godes. Wa ðam þonne þe nu bið
wælhreow, forðan he bið **cwylmed** on ecnesse! Wa ðam
þe nele nu his synna **hreowe** don, for þan he bið seald
þonne ðam reðestan feondum þa hine grimlice deaðe
cwylmað!

[But let us toil in this transitory life lest we suffer
afterwards those eternal punishments. This time is brief
and that (eternity) is vast and unending. Therefore, that
will be the worst day, which releases no one. There will
be sought from each one what of evil or good he has

done. Woe to him then who is now bloodthirsty, for he will be tormented in eternity! Woe to him who does not wish now to do penance for his sins, for he will be given then to those cruellest fiends who will torment him fiercely in death!]

Such an envelope pattern, with its resulting structural cohesiveness, is all the more worth emphasizing since it also involves the concluding sections of Vercelli xxii, which do not rely on the Isidorian source, as is the case with the passage quoted above. This circumstance shows the degree to which the Anglo-Saxon homilist had assimilated his source and had come to master it so as to be able to insert his own original contributions without upsetting the overall semantic and structural consistency of the whole.

Another semantic field broadly attested in Vercelli xxii is the one related to the spirit and the mind, with its fundamental function of memory. The Anglo-Saxon homilist seems to have mastered very well the distinction between the different components of the intellectual, spiritual, and affective life of human beings, as the opening lines of the homily quoted above show (lines 2–4).³⁵ Here a distinction is made between *sawle*, *gast*, *heorte*, and *mod*, following the Latin source's distinction between *anima*, *spiritus*, *cor*, and *animus*.³⁶ In total, *sawle*, *gast*, *heorte*, and *mod* occur no fewer than thirty-two times in Vercelli xxii.³⁷ Their repeated occurrences clearly convey a prevalence of the spiritual and psychological dimension over the physical, bodily one. Indeed, the very word *lichaman* occurs twenty-two times in total, and all these occurrences convey an utterly negative view of the body as inherently sinful and dangerously able to corrupt the mind, the soul, and the heart. In this regard it may be worth quoting a relevant passage from Vercelli xxii (lines 147–56):

Ne syle ðu þine **sawle** on þines **lichaman** geweald, ac
geclænsa ðu þine **mod** fram yfelum **geþohtum** ⁊
gebrideligað eow fram þæs **lichoman** scionesse þæt
eowre **þohtas** syn clæne ⁊ hlutre. For ðan we witon þæt
be urum **geþohtum** we sceolon beon demede fram Gode,
nales þæt an þæt he ure **lichoman** sceawað ac eac swylce
ure **geþohtas**. God se is dema; be urum **geþohtum** he

mænð³⁸ ure **sawle**. For ðan þonne hie us cumað, utan him wiðstandan 7 of ure **heortan** aweorpan ða yflan **geþohtas**. For þan ne mæg se **lichama** nanwiht don butan hit þæt **mod** wille. Utan clænsian ure **geðohtas**, þonne ure **lichoma** ne syngað.

[Do not grant your soul into your body's power, but cleanse your mind from evil thoughts and bridle yourselves against the instigation of the body (so) that your thoughts may be clean and pure. For we know that according to our thoughts we must be judged by God, not at all that he sees our bodies alone, but also our thoughts. God is the judge; according to our thoughts he (considers) our soul. Therefore, when they come to us, let us withstand them, and throw from our hearts those evil thoughts. For the body can do nothing unless the mind wants it. Let us cleanse our thoughts, then our body will not sin.]

Here the audience is poignantly reminded of the priority of the spiritual and intellectual dimension over the bodily one, and is prompted not to yield their mind and soul to the lustful, corrupt body.

Additionally, the text is scattered with verbs meaning 'to think,' 'to ponder,' 'to remember,' such as *ongitan*, *gemunan*, *myndgian*, *smeagan*, *geðencan*, and its cognate noun (*ge*)ðoht. These terms usually occur at the beginnings of paragraphs, almost as if to recall the audience's attention to the development of spiritual meditation. I quote here as an example the beginning of the second paragraph (lines 20–4):

Ongitaþ, mine þa leofestan bearn, cwæð sanctus Isodorus, 7 æghwylc cristen mann **smeage** on him sylfum hu nearo se siðfæt bið þære synfullan sawle. ... Cwæð sanctus Ysodorus, **geþence** nu ðu, man, 7 **ongyt** gif ðu sylf þe nelt alysan þa hwile þe ðu miht.

['Consider, my dearest children,' said Saint Isidore, 'and let each Christian man reflect within himself how oppressive is the journey of the sinful soul.' ... Saint

Isidore said, ‘Now think, man, and consider if you don’t want to release yourself while you could.’]

As is the case with the semantic field concerning affliction, the one regarding memory and thought is also attested in the final section of the homily (lines 196–8), that is, the part of the text not indebted to Isidore, where at least two words convey the function of memory:

Ælce dæge he us gearwað ⁊ we his bioð **ungemyndige**.
Ælce dæge he us fedeð ⁊ ælce dæge he us miltsað, ⁊ we
hira bioð **forgitende**.

[Every day he clothes us, and we are unmindful of this.
Every day he feeds us, and every day he is merciful to us,
and we are forgetful of these things.]

At times, specific semantic fields are attested only in certain sections of the homily, such as the field concerned with the idea of confinement. This theme is first introduced at the very beginning of the homily by the noun *nearunes* (lines 2 and 3), where it literally translates the Latin *angustia*.³⁹ The cognate adjective *nearo* occurs again at line 21, at the beginning of the second paragraph, but it is in lines 39–42 that the words belonging to this semantic field are concentrated, to convey both the physical constraint and spiritual torment of the sinful one after death:

⁊ se lichoma lið on eorðan **isne gearwod** ⁊ mid
racentum geðryd mid bendum gebunden ⁊ mid **fetrum**
gefæstnod, ⁊ þære synfullan sawle ne beoð þa tintrego
gelytlode.

[And the body lies in the earth confined in iron fetters,
and bound with chains and bound in bonds and fastened
with fetters and the tortures of the sinful soul will not be
diminished.]

This is a climactic sequence of *commata* linked by the anaphora of *and*, which together with aural effects, such as the alliteration of *b* and *f* in the two key noun phrases *mid bendum gebunden* and *mid*

fetrum gefæstnod, helps to convey the anguish of the soul prey to the forces of evil in hell. It may be interesting to note in passing that in the Würzburg manuscript of the *Synonyma* the phrase *uincta compedibus* [chained with shackles] in *Synonyma* I, 16 is glossed *gebunden bendum* [bound with bonds].⁴⁰ The only other occurrence of a word of this semantic field is at the end of Vercelli xxii, namely the adverb *fæste* [firmly] (line 206), where the audience is urged to hold *fast* to the good teachings of the homily, thus implicitly contrasting the fetters of sin constraining the body with the bliss that holding fast to the teachings of the Church can earn us.

The Anglo-Saxon homilist often shows a considerable degree of independence, since he highlights concepts which are secondary in the Latin text or deliberately moves away from it. Such is the case in line 52, which reads:

Unlust me wæs to lifianne, walic to sweltanne.
[I was disgusted with life, and woeful (it was for me) to die.]

The Old English sentence roughly translates the Latin: ‘*Viuendi enim mihi taedium est, moriendi uotum, sola mihi mors placet*’⁴¹ [I am indeed bored with life, I desire to die, only death pleases me]. Clearly, however, only the first *comma* of the Old English sentence can be traced back literally to the Latin source, while the second is unparalleled.⁴² Furthermore, the second clause of the Old English sentence is made semantically antithetical to the first, the antithesis being emphasized by the *uariatio* ‘**Unlust** ... to lifianne / **walic** to sweltanne.’

Rarely does the Anglo-Saxon homilist expand the Latin material. When he does, it is in order to serve his didactic aims or rhetorical taste. For example, the sentence following the one just quoted reads (lines 52–5):

Eawla, deað, swete eart ðu þam earmum 7 þam
wædliendum, 7 wunsum eart ðu þam unrotum 7 þam
gnorniendum, 7 biter eart ðu ðam weligum þisse
worulde, for þan hie forlætan sceolon hira blissa 7 onfoð
unrotnessa.

[Alas, death! Sweet are you to the wretched and the destitute, and pleasant are you to the sad and the mourning; and bitter are you to the prosperous of this world, for they must lose their pleasures and receive sadnesses.]

Here, only the first part of the sentence has a parallel in the Latin source; the rest, from *wunsum* to the end, is an original expansion juxtaposing those who are poor and miserable on earth with the rich who are enjoying a blissful state (*blis*) in this life, but will eventually be doomed to unhappiness (*unrotnes*) after death.⁴³ *Blissa* and *unrotnessa* can also be seen as terms of an antithesis, a device of which the Anglo-Saxon homilist seems to be almost as fond as Isidore,⁴⁴ and which he often emphasizes with aural effects, in this case rhyme. However, as the homily goes on, he does not translate the Latin antithesis ‘*melius est bene mori quam male uiuere*’⁴⁵ [it is better to die well than to live badly], since the corresponding Old English passage reads (lines 56–8):

Selre bið men þæt he swelte þonne he yfele lybbe mid
synnum ⁊ on Godes unwillan sy ungesæliglice
drohtiende[.]

[It is better for a man that he should die than that he should live evilly with sins and be in God’s disfavour and living wickedly.]

In the vernacular version, the first Latin adverb *bene* is omitted, whereas the second, *male*, is expanded into three *commata*, in line with the homilist’s didactic task. Also, the omission of *bene* could well be explained by the blatantly Christian reading that the Anglo-Saxon homilist gives of what may well recall a Stoic or Epicurean precept.⁴⁶ Indeed, the verb phrase *bene mori* seems to evoke the Stoic fascination with suicide, and it therefore comes as no surprise that our Anglo-Saxon homilist has expunged it.

As Scragg has noted, little of the characteristic tautological style of the *Synonyma* has survived in Vercelli xxii.⁴⁷ In particular, the Anglo-Saxon homilist has dismissed the long strings of synonymous *commata* characteristic of the *Reimprosa*, of which the

stilus ysydorianus as exemplified in the *Synonyma* is a specific manifestation.⁴⁸ In the Old English homily the lengthy, asyndetical sequences of *commata* in the Latin source are broken up into shorter sentences, where the *commata* are mostly joined by conjunctions such as *and* [and], *þonne* and *þa* [then, when], *þæt* [that], *for þan* [therefore, because], *gif* [if], *ac* [but], *hwile* [while], and *læs* [lest], which conspire to give the Old English text a more discursive and at times even argumentative tone. With the exception of *and*, the most widely used conjunction is *for þan*, occurring in total thirty times throughout the homily, and especially in the more didactic and exhortatory passages. In lines 95–100, for example, where one of the main concepts of the homily is summarized – that is, that this life’s sorrows are sent by God and are the result of our foolish obedience to our body’s sinful dispositions – *for þan* is used three times, once in each sentence of the passage, to point out the exact causality that this belief introduces into human vicissitudes:

Wite ðu, man, butan Godes willan þe on becymeð þæt
 yrre, ac ðonne he yrre geworden bið ⁊ for urum synnum
 gegremed bið, þonne set he us þrowunga on, ⁊ **for ðan**
 þe he wolde us to his willan gebigean. Þæs lichoman
 lustum we oftost fulgangað, **for ðan** he sceal bion
 hwilum swungen. Se lichoma oftost gesyngað, **for ðan** he
 sceal beon geuntrumod ⁊ witnod.

[Know you, man, without God’s accord that ire will befall you. But when he is made angry and is provoked by our sins, then he sets us in sufferings, for he wished us to bend to his will. For we most often carry out the lusts of the body; therefore he (the body) must at times be chastised. The body most often sins and therefore he must be weakened and punished.]

Similarly, at the end of the homily (lines 211–15), where the homilist urges the audience to repent, reminding them of Doomsday and the grim torments of hell, *for ðan* also occurs three times, again emphasizing the inevitability of eternal punishment for those who refuse to repent, and so contributing to the climactic pathos of the passage:

For **ðan** þæt is se wyrresta dæg se nænigne onlyst. Þær bið soht fram anra gehwylcum hwæt he yfeles gedyde oðþe godes. Wa ðam þonne, þe nu bið wælhreow, **for** **ðan** he bið cwylmed on ecnesse! Wa ðam þe nele nu his synna hreowe don, **for** **þan** he bið seald þonne ðam reðestan feondum þa hine grimlice deaðe cwylmað!⁴⁹

In the first sentence of the above passage, *for ðan* acts as a coordinating conjunction, while in its other two occurrences it is used as a subordinating one. Here, the inescapable principle of the correspondence of hellish torments to a sinful life receives a most appropriate formulation by the stringent parallelism of the last two sentences.⁵⁰ Such a parallelism is in turn heightened by the parallel occurrences of *wælhreow/hreow* and *cwylmed/cwylmað* respectively in the first and second clauses of these two sentences, although the latter sentence is a *comma* longer, in accordance with that pattern of the *stilus ysydorianus* called *Schlußlängung* or *Schlußweise*.⁵¹ Once again, anaphora (*wa ðam, for þan*) and echoic repetition (*nu, wælhreow, cwylmed/cwylmað, hreowe*) single out this passage and emphasize its didactic significance. An instance of anaphora recalling the Old English *wa ðam* occurs in *Synonyma* I, 64:

Vae diem illum, quando peccauī! uae diem illum, quando
transgressus sum! uae diem illum, quando malum
expertus sum!

[Woe to that day when I sinned! Woe to that day when I
transgressed! Woe to that day when I experienced evil!]

The different wording and context of the two relevant passages, however, exclude the possibility of any direct borrowing from the Latin, all the more so since the Old English passage occurs in the final section of Vercelli xxii, which does not rely on the Isidorian text. However, it could indeed be argued that, given the familiarity shown by the Anglo-Saxon homilist with the *Synonyma*, he is loosely recalling the Latin from memory.

Similarly, the other conjunctions used in the homily (*þæt, þonne, hwile, gif, læs*, and *þa*) are subordinating and consequently they give the Old English text a much more complex and dynamic

syntax than the Isidorian source, where the strings of *commata* and *cola* most often follow each other asyndetically and paratactically. In contrast, in the Old English text there are sentences with up to three grades of subordinate clauses, such as in lines 56–9:

Selre bið men þæt he swelte þonne he yfele lybbe mid
synnum ⁊ on Godes unwillan sy ⁊ ungesæliglice
drohtiende, for þan þe seo synfulle sawl cwið to ðam
deoflum þonne hie hie tintregiaþ: ...

[It is better for a man that he should die than that he
should live evilly with sins and be in God's disfavour and
living wickedly, therefore the sinful soul says to the
devils when they torture her: ...]

Here we find two subordinate clauses ('þæt he swelte þonne ... drohtiende') coordinated by *þonne*, and both depending on the main clause *selre bið men*; then a second-grade subordinate clause introduced by *for þan* and depending on the first two subordinate clauses; finally a third-grade subordinate clause, introduced by *þonne*.

Even short sentences in Vercelli xxii can show a complex syntactical structure. Such is the case of a sentence occurring at lines 200–1:

Utan sceamian ure ær þan þe sio tid cume ðe us nealæceð
þæt we sceolon ures lifes eallra ura dæda riht agildan.

[Let us be ashamed before that time comes, which brings
us (to) when we must yield the reckoning of our lives
and of all our deeds.]

In this brief sentence we find no fewer than three grades of subordinate clauses, namely a temporal clause, a relative clause, and another temporal clause.

The livelier pace of the Old English prose is also highlighted by the insertion of different speakers and mock dialogues between them. While the *Synonyma* is basically made up of long monologues by Man and Reason (the second book in particular is a

long exhortatory monologue by Reason),⁵² in the Old English homily I count at least four speakers. The most recurrent voice is that of the source, Isidore, introduced no fewer than eleven times (lines 2, 20, 23, 26, 37, 47, 67, 106, 129, 157, and 219), generally at the beginning of each paragraph and once (line 219), significantly, in the last address to the audience at the very end of the homily, which, in fact, does not rely on the Isidorian source. These direct references to Isidore, occurring as they do at regular intervals throughout the homily, represent a frame encircling the Old English text and contributing to its cohesive structure. Sometimes, the Anglo-Saxon homilist appropriates the saint's name, as seems to happen at line 157, when after referring to Isidore, he switches to the first-person singular (*ic*). It is only at the end of the homily, however, at line 205, that this same pronoun can unequivocally be taken to refer to the homilist. It appears that the homilist also emerges as a speaker whenever he makes use of the first-person plural pronoun (*we*), which occurs quite often in the text, but especially in the most purely meditative and exhortatory passages. It is noteworthy that no occurrence of the first-person plural pronoun is found in the first three paragraphs (lines 1–66), whereas the last two paragraphs of the homily (lines 175–220) are almost exclusively in the first-person plural, where the pronoun *we* occurs as frequently as forty-nine times in forty-five lines.⁵³ The passages showing the most frequent use of the pronoun *we* generally alternate with passages where the use of the second-person pronoun (whether singular or plural) prevails. As an analysis of the occurrences shows, the first-person passages comprise lines 75–80, 97–105, 114–25, 150–6, 180–6, and 191–219, while the second-person ones comprise lines 89–96, 106–13, 129–50, 157–8, and 167–73. This alternation between first- and second-person pronouns gives the Old English text an inherently dialectic tone, which can indeed be considered to be an original and independent interpretation on the part of the Anglo-Saxon homilist of the dialogue between Man and Reason that constitutes the formal frame of the *Synonyma*.

In addition to the narratorial voice, representing Isidore or the Anglo-Saxon homilist, there are three other speakers interspersed in the first half of the homily, namely the soul, the devils, and Man. The soul is introduced three times (lines 4, 47–8, and 58–9), all within the first four paragraphs of the homily, the section of the

text which is more specifically eschatological in tone. This eschatological dimension is introduced from the very beginning of the homily (lines 1–2), which is indeed presented as a text dealing with the separation of the soul from the body: ‘Her sægð hu sanctus Isodorus spræc be ðære sawle gedale be þæs lichoman’ [here is told how Saint Isidore spoke concerning the parting of the soul and of the body].⁵⁴ The first time, the soul’s speech consists of a rather lengthy monologue (concluding at line 19), lamenting her⁵⁵ sorrows and suffering, while in the corresponding passage of *Synonyma* (Book I, 5–69), the speaker is Man. The other two direct speeches of the sinful soul are briefer, covering five lines each (lines 48–52 and 59–63 respectively): whereas in the former the soul again complains about her misery, in the latter she addresses her executioners, that is, the devils, pleading with them to spare her. The devils then answer the soul (lines 64–6), thus engaging in a short dialogue which has a freshness and immediacy lacking in the Latin source. Finally, the last speaker who is assigned a direct speech is Man (lines 83–7):

For ðan ne sceal nan man gnornigan on his untrumnesse,
ne cweðan: ‘Forhwan aræfne ic ðas yfel oððe hwi eom ic
næted? Wa la, to hwan þrowige ic þis?’ Ac ma ðu scealt
cweðan: ‘Dryhten, þe ic syngode, swa mycel ic ne gefele
swa ic wyrðe eom.’

[Therefore no man must complain in his infirmity or say:
‘Why do I suffer these evils or why am I afflicted? Woe,
why do I suffer this?’ But rather you must say: ‘Lord, I
have sinned against you, I do not feel as much as I
deserve.’]

One can compare the Old English passage with *Synonyma* I, 29:

Peccauī, ut eram dignus recipio. Aequalem uindictam
peccati mei non sentio, minus percussum me quam
merebar agnosco, iuxta modum criminis minor est
retributio ultionis, secundum meritum peccatorum dispar
est causa poenarum, non sunt tanta supplicia quanta
exstiterunt peccata.

[I sinned, I receive (punishment) as I deserved. I do not feel a punishment equal to my sin, I am aware that I am less beaten than I deserved, in respect to the measure of my crime the reward of punishment is smaller, in respect to the gravity of my sins the reason of my woes is disproportionate, my punishments are not as grave as my sins were.]

The Old English text follows the Latin source almost verbatim, but the Anglo-Saxon homilist has broken up the strings of *commata* and joined two of them with *and*. Also, he has summarized at least seven *commata* in a single Old English sentence ('Dryhten ... eom'), with an effect of greater immediacy.

Another element that gives the Old English text its dialectic flavour is the constant shifting between this world and the one that awaits mankind after death. In this regard, the first major distinction that emerges is that between the first four more explicitly eschatological paragraphs of the homily and the rest of the text. While the opening paragraphs deal with the separation of the sinful soul from the body, and the eternal, irredeemable torments of hell, the central and final sections of the homily are more penitential in tone and can be considered as a spiritual meditation on the fleetingness of the pleasures of this life as well as its hardships, joined with a typically homiletic injunction to repent. However, the reference to Doomsday and the future life beyond, especially the eternal punishment of hell, is always underlying and emerges explicitly at several points throughout the homily. Significantly, the devil's deceitful temptations and his snatching us from this life to lead us to the tortures of hell are recalled four times, although twice (lines 166–7 and 214–15), the devil is indirectly referred to as 'the fiend.' It is useful to quote the context of the last reference to the devil at length (lines 212–15):

Wa ðam þonne þe nu bið **wælhreow**, for ðan he bið
cwylmed on ecnesse! Wa ðam þe nele nu his synna
hreowe don, for þan he bið seald þonne **ðam reðestan**
feondum þa hine grimlice deaðe **cwylmað!**⁵⁶

This passage occurs in the final section of the homily, which does not rely on the Isidorian source, and it closely recalls a passage

occurring at the beginning of the homily (lines 42–5):

Ac þa **cwelleras** unoflinnedlice **cwelmað**, ⁊ hie
unasecgendllice gnornunge hire wite mænað, for þan þe
ða **deoflu** swa hwæt swa hie magon **wælhreowlices** hie
þencap be hire ⁊ doð. ⁊ þusendfealdum witum hie hie
tintregiað ⁊ slitað[.]⁵⁷

I have highlighted in bold the verbal parallels between the two passages, including the word *deoflu* (line 44), of which the above-quoted noun phrase *ðam reðestan feondum* (line 215) can be taken to be a form of synonymous variation. Furthermore, the two passages are obviously linked by the only occurrences of the two cognates *wælhreow/wælhreowlic* in the whole homily.⁵⁸ These two passages, then, again show how echoic repetitions link different sections of Vercelli xxii, contributing to its circular development.

Similarly, the menacing thought of Doomsday looms at least three times (lines 150–3, 180–5, and 211–12) in Vercelli xxii, and in all of them its terrifying judicial dimension is stressed. For example, lines 150–3 read:

For ðan we witon þæt be urum gēpohtum we sceolon
beon **demedē** fram Gode, nales þæt an þæt he ure
lichoman sceawað ac eac swylce ure gēpohtas. God se is
dema; be urum gēpohtum he mænð ure sawle.

[For we know that according to our thoughts we must be
judged by God, not at all that he sees our bodies alone,
but also our thoughts. God is the judge; according to our
thoughts he (judges) our souls.]

What is noteworthy here is the occurrence of the two related words *demedē* and *dema*; moreover, *mænð* is apparently a misreading for the Latin *iudicat*,⁵⁹ so had it not been for this we might reasonably expect a verb from the same semantic field in its place.⁶⁰

The dichotomy between this world and the next is constantly stressed. In particular, what is often highlighted is the eternal character of the latter and the transient nature of the former. I

quote lines 68–71:

For ðan ne lætað eow, men þa leofestan, þysse worulde
welan beswican, for ðan heo is sceort ⁊ swicol eallum þe
hire fylgeaþ. Ealle þas lænendlican earfeðnessa ende
habbað, ac ða toweardan ende nabbap.

[Therefore, most dearly beloved, do not allow the
prosperity of this world to deceive you, for it is short and
false to all who pursue it. All these transient afflictions
have (an) end; but those future (things) have no end.]

The doublet of adjectives *sceort* and *swicol*, and the polyptoton *beswican*–*swicol*, stress the transient and illusory nature of anything earthly. By contrast, the last sentence, made up of two parallel *commata* linked by rhyme and antithesis (*habbað*–*nabbap*), as well as the repetition of the key word *ende*, emphasizes that unlike this world, the one after death is never-ending. The two contrasting adjectives, *lænendlic* (occurring only in Vercelli xxii and in item xxix of Napier's *Sammlung*),⁶¹ and *toweward*, occur again jointly in lines 92–3, emphasizing the same concept as above. Finally, *lænendlic* occurs again in line 77, where it is in ideal opposition to *ece* [eternal] (line 78), while *toweward* is spread throughout the homily and we find it again contrasting with an adjective, *leas* [false], in lines 186–7. In sum, the last two-thirds of the homily are interwoven with pairs of contrasting noun and prepositional phrases as well as adverbs, representing a sort of red thread running through the text, especially in the final lines of the homily where the urge to repent is expressed in a climactic injunction. I give here a list of these contrasting pairs:

þas lænendlican earfeðnessa
[the transient hardships]

on þysse worulde
[in this world]

þas lænendlican earfoðnessa
[the transient hardships]

nu ... on þyssum life
[now ... in this life]

on þyssum life
[in this life]

her
[here]

þa toweardan (lines 70–1)
[the future ones]

on ecnesse (lines 73–5)
[in eternity]

þæt ece wuldor (lines 77–8)
[the eternal glory]

on þam toweardan life (lines 79–80)
[in the future life]

on ðam toweardan life (line 80)
[in the future life]

to þam ecan life (lines 81–2)
[to the eternal life]

nu ... on þyssum middangearde [now ... in this world]	þa toweardan witu (lines 89–90) [the future torments]
þa toweardan witu [the future torments]	þæs lænendlican (lines 92–3) [of the transient one]
on þysse worulde lufan [in the love of this world]	þa lufe þæs heofonlican rices (lines 103–4) [the love of the heavenly kingdom]
nu [now]	þone egeslican dom and deaðes dæg (lines 111–13) [the dreadful judgment and the day of death]
nu ... nu [now ... now]	þa toweardan (witu) (lines 167–70) [the future torments]
on þysse leasan worulde [in this false world]	on þam toweardan dome (lines 186–7) [in the future judgment]
nu [now]	on þam heofonlican brydbure (lines 187–8) [in the heavenly bride-chamber]
nu ... þas eorðlican welan [now ... the earthly riches]	þa heofonlican (lines 189–90) [the heavenly ones]
on ðysse medmyclan tide [in this transitory time]	in ecnesse (line 208) [in eternity]
on þyssum lænan life [in this transitory life]	þa ecan tintrego (lines 209–10) [the eternal torments]
nu [now]	on ecnesse (line 213) [in eternity]
nu [now]	þonne (line 214) [then]
her on worulde [here in the world]	on þære toweardan (lines 219–20) [in the future one]

It may be worth pointing out that these pairs of contrasting words seem to occur in a very similar syntactical position, with the words

conveying the transience of this world occurring first in context, and those conveying the eternal nature of the next world occurring second, except in lines 92–3 where the two adjectives *laenendlic* and *toward* form a chiasmic pattern with their previous joint occurrence in lines 70–1.

This eschatological dimension is only partly and indirectly traceable back to the *Synonyma*, where the dialogue between Man and Reason seems to be much more concerned with the *hic et nunc* than with the fate of the soul after death. As Gatch has pointed out, the Anglo-Saxon anonymous homilists ‘seem almost intuitively to have stressed the Last Judgement, sometimes even transferring quite explicitly non-Judgement materials to the great Last Day,’ and such a transfer is ‘a possibility’ in Vercelli xxii.⁶² The immanent focus of the *Synonyma* is evident both in the first book, when, for example, Man complains about evils that are of this world, such as the hostility of his fellow human beings or the corruption of judges,⁶³ and in the second book, where the *norma uiuendi* outlined by Reason is more indebted to Stoic wisdom than to purely Christian doctrine.⁶⁴ Explicit reference to the world after death is of course made in the *Synonyma*, especially in paragraphs 28, 30, and 31 of the first book, which are selectively drawn on in the Old English homily from approximately line 79 to line 93, and in paragraphs 46 to 49 of the same book, concerning the sudden overcoming of death and the following judgment, which are drawn on in the Old English text from line 111 to line 116. In some of these paragraphs of the Isidorian text, we find contrasting pairs of words or phrases similar to those of the Old English homily. One might consider, for example, the following extracts from *Synonyma* I, 28, 30, and 31:

... quantum enim **in hoc saeculo** frangimur, tantum **in perpetuo saeculo** solidamur; quantum **in praesenti** affligimur, tantum **in futuro** gaudebimus. Si **hic** flagellis atterimur, purgati **in iudicio** inueniemur. Semper Deus **hic** uulnerat quos **ad salutem perpetuam** praeparat. In fornace probatur aurum, tu, ut sorde careas, tribulationis camino purgaris ...

[... indeed, insofar as we are broken down in this world, we shall be made strong in the eternal world; to the

degree that we are afflicted in the present (life), so much we shall rejoice in the future (one). If we are terrified by scourges here, we will be found cleansed at (our) judgment. God always wounds here those whom He prepares for eternal salvation. Gold is tested in a furnace, you, in order to get rid of the filth, will be tested by the furnace of (your) tribulation(s), ...]

Cogita, o homo, quoslibet **mundi** cruciatus, intende animo quascunque **saeculi** poenas ...; compara **hoc** totum **gehennae** ...; si times, **illas** poenas time; **istae temporales** sunt, **illae aeternae**; **istae finem** habent, **illae perpetuae** sunt; in **istis** moriendo tormenta recedunt, in **illis** moriendo **aeternus** dolor succedit.

[Ponder, o man, on whichever torments of the world; understand in your mind whichever afflictions of the world ... ; compare all this to hell ... ; if you fear, fear those pains; these are temporary, those eternal; these have an end, those are perpetual; in these the torments cease when one dies, in those, when one dies, an eternal pain succeeds.]

Qui enim **hic** castigatus corrigitur, **illic** liberatur; qui uero nec sub flagello corriguntur, et **temporali** poena, et **aeterna** damnantur, et in **hoc** prius iudicantur **saeculo**, et **illic** denuo in **futuro** ... **hic** habent initium tormentorum, et **illic** perfectionem poenarum.

[Indeed, he who is here amended while he is punished, will there be set free; indeed, those who are not amended – not even when whipped, will be damned to both temporal and eternal punishments, and will be first judged in this world, and then again in the future one. ... Here they receive the beginning of (their) torments, and there the fulfilment of their punishments.]

The reference to the world after death, whether heaven or hell, is not, however, of central importance in the *Synonyma*, as it undoubtedly is in the Old English homily. The pre-eminence of the

hic et nunc over the otherworld in the *Synonyma* is also evident at a lexical level, where we cannot trace within the Latin text a pattern of antithetical vocabulary on this matter as consistent and extended as that found within the Old English homily.

The first of the three extracts quoted above, that is, *Synonyma* I, 28, deserves special attention because it was selectively translated not only in Vercelli xxii but also in the last homily of the Vercelli Book, namely Vercelli xxiii.⁶⁵ The latter is one of the two extant Old English prose versions of Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci*,⁶⁶ the other being a full translation of the Latin *Vita* preserved in a late eleventh-century manuscript, London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D. xxi, fols. 18–40.⁶⁷ The Vespasian *Life* and Vercelli xxiii have been shown to derive independently from an earlier translation of Felix's *Vita* which has not come down to us.⁶⁸ Without touching on the relationship between the two prose versions as well as the origin and dating of the putative original Old English translation of Felix's *Vita*,⁶⁹ suffice it to say that the Vespasian *Life* is on the whole a comprehensive narrative, reflecting all the contents of Felix's account,⁷⁰ while Vercelli xxiii consists of an excerpt which corresponds to only a few chapters of the Latin *Vita*,⁷¹ and amounts to around a seventh of the whole narrative of Guthlac's life.⁷² In particular, the anonymous epitomizer⁷³ selected only those episodes in the *Vita* in which Bartholomew, Guthlac's patron saint, is involved, namely when Bartholomew appears and with his teaching saves Guthlac from despair, and when, through his intervention, Guthlac is delivered from the gates of hell where the saint had been transported by devilish fiends.⁷⁴ In sum, Vercelli xxiii focuses on the central episodes of Guthlac's life as a hermit and, especially, on the saint's constancy in the face of temptations with the assistance of Bartholomew.⁷⁵ The patron's role is restated in the ending of Vercelli xxiii, which finds no counterpart in any other extant versions of Guthlac's legend, in that after having been rescued by Bartholomew at the gates of hell, Guthlac directly ascends to heaven in his patron's company, now playing the role of psychopomp, and is received by Christ.⁷⁶

The passage ultimately derived from *Synonyma* I, 28⁷⁷ is found in chapter xxx, lines 24–6, of Felix's *Vita* and is translated into Old English in both the Vespasian *Life* and Vercelli xxiii, while it has no counterpart in the two Exeter Book poems, *Guthlac A* and *B*.⁷⁸

Felix's passage reads:

Quanto enim in hoc saeculo frangeris, tanto in perpetuum solidaris: et quanto in praesenti adfligeris, tanto in futuro gaudebis.

[For insofar as you are broken down in this world, you shall be made whole and firm in eternity; and to the degree that you are afflicted in this present life, so much shall you rejoice in the future.]⁷⁹

This passage derived from the *Synonyma* occurs in a section of the *Vita* when Guthlac has to confront two devils who appear to him on a day when the saint is pondering how he could improve and strengthen his faith. The devils pretend to desist from tempting the holy man, finally acknowledging his temperance, and say that they have come to the saint to praise the example of Christ himself, Moses, Elijah, and the desert fathers, who all excelled in their abstinence. The words borrowed from the *Synonyma* are actually spoken by the two devils as a piece of pious advice they give Guthlac. Thereby, the two hellish figures state that principle of inverse proportion ruling the afterlife destiny to which due space is given in the Isidorian text⁸⁰ and which is also emphasized by the compiler of Vercelli xxii.⁸¹ Incidentally, the dialogical context in Felix's work can explain the only relevant discrepancy between the *Vita* and the *Synonyma*, namely the fact that the verbs are in the second person singular in the former text, while in the corresponding section of the source text they are in the first person plural.⁸²

Although Vercelli xxii and xxiii are unrelated texts,⁸³ and the relevant passage from *Synonyma* I, 28 is after all very brief, it may be interesting to compare its rendition in both Vercelli homilies, since such a comparison could cast some further light onto the art of the Anglo-Saxon compiler who accomplished the translation of the homiletic recasting of the *Synonyma* as we know it from Vercelli xxii.⁸⁴ I quote below the relevant lines from the latter homily (79–83), highlighting in bold the verbatim parallels with the *Synonyma*:

Swa mycle swiðor swa we nu beoð nætte on þyssum life,

swa mycle ma we feogað on ðam toweardan life. For ðan symle God her wundað ⁊ swingð ða þe he wile habban ⁊ to þam ecan life gelædan. Swa swa gold on ofne he hie syð ⁊ costað, ⁊ swa onsægdnesse he hie onfehð.

[By so much more fiercely as we now are afflicted in this life, by so much more we will rejoice in the future life. For God continually wounds and chastises here those whom he wishes to have and to lead to the eternal life. Just as gold in the furnace, he seethes and proves them, and he receives them as sacrifices.]

As has already been pointed out, the Vercelli compiler often translates his source selectively.⁸⁵ Here, he has omitted the sentence ‘si hic flagellis ... inueniemur,’ and has rendered only the second of the two sentences which in the *Synonyma* established the ratio between the suffering in this life and the bliss in the next one (‘quantum ... gaudebimus’).⁸⁶ The translation of the selected phrases is on the whole quite faithful. In particular, the Latin sentence ‘quantum in praesenti affligimur, tantum in futuro gaudebimus’ is fittingly rendered in Old English with a sentence made up of two parallel clauses introduced by *swa mycle swiðor swa / swa mycle ma*.

The few discrepancies with the source text mainly concern the distinctive use of doublets where the Latin has only one verb or verb phrase. Thus, both the verb *uulnerat* and the verb phrase *ad salutem perpetuam praeparat* are rendered with the doublets *wundað and swingð* and *wile habban and to þam ecan life gelædan* respectively. Another doublet, *syð and costað*, renders the Latin verb *probat*, although the latter is a passive verb referred to the subject *aurum*, while the Old English verbs are two active forms referred to the subject *God*. Also, the analogy with the gold tested in the furnace is rendered more freely and effectively, insofar as it makes explicit in one brief sentence what in the Latin source was couched in a lengthy sequence of synonymous *commata*. Furthermore, the change in the subject – from *aurum* to *God* – and in the diathesis of the verb – from passive to active – is felicitous in that it emphasizes the role of God as the one responsible for man’s share of suffering in this life and the corresponding reward in the next one. In this regard, it should be pointed out that this is

one of the passages in the homily where the opposition between this world and the afterlife is made most explicit thanks to the parallel distribution of prepositional phrases and adverbs denoting space and time, such as *on þyssum life / on ðam towearðan life*, and *her / to þam ecan life*.⁸⁷ As far this passage is concerned, its overt eschatological allusions are not original to the Old English version, but they find a counterpart in the Latin source, where even Judgment Day is hinted at.⁸⁸

The corresponding passage in Vercelli xxiii shows an essentially different treatment of the ultimate source text. I quote the relevant passage below (lines 60–6), again highlighting in bold the verbatim parallels with the *Synonyma*:

þonne gif ðu þæs wilnast, þæt ðu of ðe ða ærran
fremednesse yfelra leahtra ofaðwea, þonne scealt þu
þinne lichaman þurh forhæfednesse weccan, for þan
swiððor swa ðu þe her on worulde swencst wecest to
forgifenesse þinra gylta, **swa ðu þonne eft bist in**
ecnessum getrymed fæstlicor, swa micle swiðor swa
ðu on þyssan andweardan life ma earfeða dreogest,
swa micle þu eft in towyrðnesse gefehst.

[Therefore, if you wish that, that is (if you wish) that you may take away from you the former effects of evil sins, then you shall afflict your body through abstinence, for the more vehemently you afflict and torment yourself for the forgiveness of your sins here in the world, the more resolutely you will be comforted then in eternity, and by so much more severely you endure more of hardships in this present life, by so much (more) will you receive afterwards in the future.]⁸⁹

Unlike the compiler of Vercelli xxii, the person responsible for the excerpt in Vercelli xxiii has translated both of the two sentences which in the *Synonyma* state the proportion between the hardships suffered in this life and the eternal reward. In the Vercelli xxiii version the two Latin sentences, coordinated asyndetically, are included in a fairly long, complex period and introduced by the causative conjunction *for þan*. The parallel phrasing of the Latin is

rendered faithfully throughout, and so is the antagonism between this world and the next by means of adverbs and prepositional phrases denoting space and time, such as *her on worulde / þonne eft ... in ecnessum*, and *on þyssan andweardan life / eft in towyrðnesse*. There are only few minor expansions of the source text, the most significant of which is the doublet followed by a prepositional phrase ‘swencst wecest to forgifenesse þinra gylta,’ translating the Latin verb *frangeris*.⁹⁰ Finally, Vercelli xxiii follows the intermediate source of this passage, that is Felix’s *Vita*, in the use of the second person singular,⁹¹ while Vercelli xxii keeps to the first person plural of the *Synonyma*, which perfectly suits the homiletic tone of a collective meditation.

Without repeating Gonser’s censorious assessment of the *Übersetzungstechnik* of the original Old English translation of Felix’s *Vita* from which both the *Vespasian Life* and Vercelli xxiii apparently have derived,⁹² on the whole it can be said that the Vercelli xxii rendering of the relevant passage of the *Synonyma* is more felicitous insofar as it is more succinct and effective. Mainly because of the more convoluted syntax, the translation of the relevant passage in Vercelli xxiii sounds clumsier. In contrast, in Vercelli xxii the selected *commata* of the source text are translated with brief, patterned clauses, which enhance the pace of the source text. On the other hand, the frequent use of a distinctively vernacular rhetorical device, namely doublets, on the part of the compiler of Vercelli xxii is also felicitous as it underlines key points of the passage. Finally, his choice of translating the analogy of the gold tested in the furnace adds a very vivid, dramatic image to the homiletic context.

In conclusion, I hope to have shown that the homilist of Vercelli xxii must have been very familiar with his Latin source, of which he made a versatile use, translating it literally at times, but also expanding, summarizing, or omitting sections for particular effect. In so doing, he created a text that is often livelier and more immediate than the Latin source, which is often engulfed and entangled in the obsessive repetition of synonymous words, phrases, and clauses. Also, indebted as the Vercelli xxii may be to the Isidorian work, it is a text with its own internal conceptual coherence and with a rhetorical frame that serves the homiletic nature of the text and shows the strengths of the vernacular

rhetorical and homiletic tradition.

The creative interaction between the Latin source and its vernacular adaptations will be further investigated in the survey of the Old English *ubi sunt* passages in the following chapter. As has long been ascertained, the *Synonyma* were the major patristic source of this topos, but as such they were imaginatively and artfully adapted and combined with both other sources and the original inspiration of Anglo-Saxon authors.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Vernacularization of the *Synonyma*: The *ubi sunt* Topos

The *ubi sunt* [where are they (now)] theme is one of the universals of western literature, in particular in late antiquity and the Middle Ages.¹ In pre-Conquest England, in particular, this motif is so widely attested and so typical of the elegiac mood prevalent in Anglo-Saxon literature and culture that the theme has been described as an ‘obsession’ for the Anglo-Saxons.² In a classic study, Gilson pointed out that Isidore’s *Synonyma* represent the major source for the *ubi sunt* topos in the western Middle Ages,³ and Cross demonstrated that *Synonyma* II, 91 is ‘quite the favourite individual source’ for the *ubi sunt* passages in Old English prose and poetry.⁴ Furthermore, Cross showed that a few Old English *ubi sunt* passages ultimately derive from a homily by Caesarius of Arles, the *Sermo de elemosinis*,⁵ which is also the main source for the closely associated homiletic motif of the warning from the dead.⁶ The following discussion will attempt to reassess the relationship of the Old English *ubi sunt* passages with their proposed Latin sources, and in particular the analysis will indicate where expansions and variations from Latin antecedents can be traced to the influence of native Germanic rhetoric and other vernacular representations of the theme, as well as to idiosyncratic authorial choices. A further focus will be on the combination of the *ubi sunt* topos with death-themes popular with Anglo-Saxon homilists, such as the warning from the dead and the soul-and-body legend,⁷ which naturally emphasized the homiletic and moralizing potential of the *ubi sunt* topos. The latter, however, also struck a lyric chord with Anglo-Saxon writers and conveyed a genuinely evocative nostalgia for the passing of this life’s beauty and joys.

The relevant *ubi sunt* passage of the *Synonyma* reads as follows (*Synonyma* II, 91):

Brevis est huius mundi felicitas, modica est huius saeculi gloria, caduca est et fragilis temporalis potentia. Dic ubi sunt reges? ubi principes? ubi imperatores? ubi locupletes rerum? ubi potentes saeculi? ubi diuites mundi? quasi umbra transierunt, uelut somnium euanuerunt.

[This world's happiness is short, this world's glory is scanty, secular power is fleeting and temporary. Tell me, where are the kings? Where (are) the princes? Where (are) the emperors? Where (are) the rich in possessions? Where (are) the powerful of this world? They passed away as if they were a shadow, they vanished like a dream.]

As can be seen, the *ubi sunt* questions concern people, in particular the leaders of society (such as the *reges*, the *principes*, and the *imperatores*), or in general those who are rich and powerful (such as the *locupletes rerum*, the *potentes saeculi*, and the *diuites mundi*). The closest scriptural antecedent of such a form of the *ubi sunt* where 'the verbs [of the rhetorical questions] are governed by kinds of people or by proper names'⁸ has been identified in the Book of Baruch III, 16–19, especially 16 and 18:⁹

[U]bi sunt principes gentium et qui dominantur super bestias quae sunt super terram ... qui argentum thesaurizant, et aurum, in quo confidebant homines et non est finis acquisitionis eorum[?] qui argentum fabricant et solliciti sunt nec est inuentio operum illorum[?]

[Where are the princes of the nations and those who govern over the animals that are on earth? ... Those who amass silver, and gold, in which men confided, and there is no end to their accumulation? Those who forge silver and are vexed and there is no understanding of their works?]

In addition to the *ubi sunt* form containing the apostrophe to the rich and powerful of the earth, however, another formulation of

the *ubi sunt* topos exists which has been labelled the *quid profuit* form from the incipit of its biblical source, Wisdom V, 8–9:¹⁰

[Q]uid nobis profuit superbia aut quid diuitiarum iactatio
contulit nobis[?]

Transierunt omnia illa tamquam umbra, et tamquam
nuntius percurrrens[.]

What good did pride do to us, or of what use was to us
the ostentation of wealth? All those things passed away
like a shadow and like a messenger hastening through.]

Unlike in the former *ubi sunt* formulation, here the verbs of the rhetorical questions ‘are governed by nouns indicating various kinds of possessions, or by abstract nouns such as “pride” or “vain-glory.”’¹¹ As will be shown, in Old English literature these two forms of the *ubi sunt* topos are often freely conflated, thereby creating a vast stock of *ubi sunt* phrases and imagery.

Indeed, not just the Bible but also classical and antique literature offers a wide range of formulations of our topos, including apostrophes to the great men of the past,¹² laments on the famous cities of old now in ruins,¹³ and sombre recollections of departed youth and beauty.¹⁴

However, Gilson pointed out that the medieval *ubi sunt* theme is essentially, if not exclusively, biblical and Christian,¹⁵ and at least as far as the literature of homiletic, penitential, and hortatory content is concerned, his conclusions have fundamentally been confirmed by Friedman and Liborio.¹⁶ The latter scholar, in particular, has claimed that if classical authors have augmented the lists of famous men and cities recalled in the *ubi sunt* questions, they did not seem to be aware of this motif as a topos on human transience and vanity.¹⁷

On the other hand, Gilson neglected a more secular application of our motif in its lamenting the fragility of feminine beauty. Here the *ubi sunt* topos seems indeed to rely on pagan tradition, in particular the antique funeral rhetoric, where the praise of the departed included a physical and moral description according to the rhetorical device of *effictio* consisting of an ordered enumeration of features and traits from top to toe. Despite some

reluctance on the part of Christian authors to linger on the physical description, this was eventually combined with the *ubi sunt* motif and applied in particular to the transience of women's charms.¹⁸

The dichotomy between the two different traditions underlying the medieval *ubi sunt*, that is the biblical one, focused on the theme of human fragility and vanity, and the pagan one, focused on the antique cult of physical beauty,¹⁹ should not, however, be overemphasized.²⁰ Evidence shows that these two traditions were not mutually exclusive, since their conflation is attested as early as the fourth century in one of the eastern Fathers, namely Ephraem the Syrian († 373),²¹ and was eventually developed in a very popular devotional genre of the late Middle Ages such as the *plainte de la Vierge*.²² With respect to this genre too, it is worth noting that Ephraem is one of the initiators of Marian devotion in general,²³ and one of the earliest sources for the *ubi sunt* motif within a lament featuring Mary at the foot of the cross in particular.²⁴ Ephraem is indeed one of the major Christian sources of the *ubi sunt* topos, which occurs quite often in the vast corpus of Syriac, Greek, and Latin texts that circulated under his name.²⁵ Besides Ephraem, other Fathers of the eastern church, such as Basil the Great,²⁶ Cyril of Alexandria,²⁷ Gregory of Nyssa,²⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus,²⁹ and John Chrysostom,³⁰ made use of our motif in their admonitions on the vanity of human life, anticipating many medieval elaborations of the topos. The writings of the eastern Fathers, especially of Ephraem, proved to be a vast quarry of homiletic, eschatological, penitential, and devotional motifs drawn on and elaborated in the western Middle Ages, and in the Insular world in particular.³¹

The fortune of the *ubi sunt* in the Middle Ages was due not only to its theme as a topos of transience, but also to its formal and rhetorical features which made it a very effective and highly artful, ornamental formula, and as such the motif proved most congenial to medieval taste and sensibility. The *ubi sunt* questions are always structured according to the same scheme, that is *ubi* + the verb *sunt* (which can be understood or replaced by another verb), + a noun subject, and they are usually repeated several times. This reiteration follows the rules of *conduplicatio*, that is, word-repetition expressive of sorrow, indignation, or love, which

attains a heightened emotional effect insofar as the repeated rhetorical questions amplify the absence of their subject.³² Thus, the *ubi sunt* topos can be defined both as ‘a motif of mutability and a rhetoric of emotional utterance,’³³ and as such it ‘[became] the most distinctive weapon in [the] rhetorical armoury [of homilists and didactic poets of the Middle Ages], a question which controls the answer, which makes its point more forcibly than any statement.’³⁴

In the *Synonyma*, the *ubi sunt* questions are all elliptical except the first one, but they clearly understand the verb *sunt*, which is the typical verb in this kind of rhetorical question, featuring also in Caesarius’s *De elemosinis*,³⁵ and which in Old English is faithfully translated as *hwær is/hwær syndon*. However, the Old English *ubi sunt* passages also feature the formula *hwær c(w)om/hwær c(w)oman*, either translating a Latin antecedent, as is the case with Blickling homily viii, or introducing a deliberate variation with respect to the Latin source, as is the case with Vercelli x, Irvine vii, and Blickling x.³⁶

Finally, the *ubi sunt* questions of the *Synonyma* conclude with two similes comparing the fleetingness of human life to the insubstantial nature of a shadow or a dream; both can be considered commonplace. In particular, as to the shadow simile, which also occurs at the end of the *ubi sunt* questions in Caesarius’s *De elemosinis*,³⁷ its closest antecedent can be traced to Wisdom V, 9.³⁸ As we shall see, the shadow simile is contained in only one of the Old English homilies featuring the *ubi sunt* topos, namely Irvine vii;³⁹ likewise, the dream simile is found at the end of the *ubi sunt* questions in the vernacular *Sermo Augustini*.⁴⁰

The *ubi sunt* Motif in Old English Prose

Cross counted fourteen *ubi sunt* passages in Old English.⁴¹ Twelve of them occur in prose texts and include the continuous Old English gloss to the chapter *De breuitate huius uitae* of Defensor’s *Liber scintillarum* in ms. London, BL, Royal 7. C. iv,⁴² the Cotton Tiberius A. iii epitome,⁴³ and ten anonymous homilies; the remaining two *ubi sunt* passages occur in the poems *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*.

The *Synonyma* are one of the sources from which Defensor drew most intensively,⁴⁴ and, as Cross noted, together with yet another Isidorian text, the *Sententiae*,⁴⁵ are his most important source for the *ubi sunt* theme.⁴⁶ Indeed, twelve out of the twenty-five *scintillae* making up the chapter chiefly devoted to this topic, namely *De breuitate huius uitae*, derive from these two Isidorian texts, and three quotations in particular are drawn from the *Synonyma*.⁴⁷ The most relevant of these citations derives from the *ubi sunt* passage in *Synonyma* II, 91, although it is misattributed to Jerome, probably because of a scribal error, since the Isidorian citation is actually preceded by a quotation from Jerome.⁴⁸ The Old English continuous gloss to this passage is a very literal rendering of the Latin,⁴⁹ and on the whole it represents the most faithful Old English version of the *ubi sunt* passage of the *Synonyma*.⁵⁰

The Old English epitome in the Tiberius manuscript is a more extensive text, corresponding approximately to *Synonyma* II, 88–96,⁵¹ thus providing a wider context for the *ubi sunt* questions. The Tiberius epitome was first printed by Kluge in 1885,⁵² and associated with the Old English gloss to the *Liber scintillarum*,⁵³ as well as with the *ubi sunt* passages in Blickling viii, Napier xlix, *The Seafarer*, and *The Wanderer*.⁵⁴ Eventually, Heningham argued that the gloss to the chapter *De breuitate huius uitae* of the *Liber scintillarum* was the source for the Tiberius epitome.⁵⁵ Cross, however, demonstrated that the gloss to the *Liber scintillarum* and the Tiberius epitome are unrelated but derive from the same ultimate source, the *Synonyma*,⁵⁶ and they therefore must be taken as additional, independent witnesses for knowledge of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England.

Recently, Szarmach has published the first critical edition of the Tiberius epitome, which he has entitled *Warna* from the first word of this text.⁵⁷ Szarmach has compared the layout and text of *Warna* with those of two Old English-glossed witnesses of the *Synonyma*, namely the Harley and Vespasian manuscripts, as well as with CCC 448. His comparative analysis shows that while it is possible to associate both the text and layout of the Harley and Corpus manuscripts,⁵⁸ the relationship between all the witnesses Szarmach considers is far from simple and the Tiberius epitome of the *Synonyma* has distinctive traits that differentiate it from the

other relevant Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.⁵⁹

Both the Corpus and the Harley codices, especially the latter, have a layout that emphasizes the internal subdivisions of the synonymical prose into *cola et commata* as well as assisting rhythmical reading by means of plentiful punctuation. In the Vespasian manuscript the text is written out as continuous prose, but here too the punctuation and capitalization clearly mark the internal subdivisions; moreover, the second book of the *Synonyma* is divided into subchapters with yellow and red rubrics describing their topic, such as *De fornicatione*, *De castitate*, *De oratione*, etc. (The Salisbury manuscript of the *Synonyma* is the only other Anglo-Saxon witness featuring such subtitles in the second book, although they seldom coincide with those of the Vespasian codex and are much more numerous than in the latter.) Finally, not only the three manuscripts considered by Szarmach, that is the Corpus, Harley, and Vespasian manuscripts, but also the Würzburg, Royal, and Salisbury manuscripts feature rubrics or marginal notations highlighting the sections of the *Synonyma* attributable to either *Homo* or *Ratio*.⁶⁰

As far as *Warna* is concerned, the text runs as continuous prose without any internal subdivision or rubric. (In this respect, the fact that the *Homo/Ratio* rubrics are missing is not surprising, since the whole of the section underlying *Warna* is part of the long, gnomic monologue uttered by *Ratio*.) The Tiberius epitome likewise employs capitalization and punctuation (mostly consisting of *punctus simplex*) to assist the reading.⁶¹ The Old English version is on the whole a very faithful, literal one, with only a few omissions,⁶² and tries to reproduce the rhythm of the Latin with its division into *cola et commata*. However, sometimes the Anglo-Saxon translator joins the synonymous and asyndetical *commata* of the Latin text by means of conjunctions, thus giving the Old English version a more lively syntax. Mostly, the translator simply makes use of the coordinating conjunction *and*, but at times also of subordinating conjunctions, such as *þæt* in the sentence ‘swa hwæt swa þu hæfst, hafa to mildheortnysse þæt þin mægen gehelpe þearfan wædlunge’ [whatever you own, own (it) for mercy’s sake so that your power can ease the poverty of the needy],⁶³ which translates the Latin ‘quod habes, habeto ad misericordiam; suffragetur uirtus tua egeni inopiae’⁶⁴ [what you have, have it for

mercy's sake; your power may help the indigence of the poor]. Likewise in the rendition of one of the similes illustrating the crucial concept that the higher the status, the more grievous the punishment,⁶⁵ 'alta arbor a uentis fortior agitur, et rami eius citius in ruina confringuntur'⁶⁶ [a tall tree is shaken more vigorously by the winds and its branches are more rapidly broken in a downfall],⁶⁷ the Anglo-Saxon translator inserted a parallel structure, that is 'swa hehre treow swa strenglucur fram windum astyred his bogas rædlucur beoð tobrocene' [the taller the tree the more violently it is agitated by the winds and its boughs are more readily broken]. Such patterned syntax has an antecedent in the preceding sentence, 'quanto maior honor, tanto maiora pericula' [so much greater the honour, so much greater the perils], which has been faithfully translated 'swa micle witodlice swa mara wurðmynt, swa miccle maran beoð fræcednissa' [surely, so much greater the worldly glory, so much greater are the perils]. Finally, at times the Anglo-Saxon translator is frustrated in his attempt to adhere closely to the synonymical prose of his antecedent and has to make use of the same Old English word where the Latin has two synonyms, as is the case with *ymtrym(m)ed* ([surrounded, protected], lines 16 and 17), translating both *praemunitus* [protected], and *constipatus* [surrounded], or with *gedrefed* ([troubled, afflicted], lines 20 and 21) translating both *turbidus* [troubled] and *turbatus* [upset, confused].

Szarmach has also compared six sets of variant readings from the Harley, Corpus, and Vespasian manuscripts, on the one hand, and from the Tiberius epitome, on the other, and has shown that both the Latin text and its Old English renderings have far from stable features.⁶⁸ In contrast, Vercelli xxii apparently 'bears a closer relationship to *Warna*' than the three Latin copies in the Vespasian, Harley, and Corpus manuscripts.⁶⁹ In fact the selection from the *Synonyma* on which Vercelli xxii relies does not include the paragraphs translated in *Warna*,⁷⁰ rendering a close comparison between the Vercelli homily and the Tiberius epitome impossible. However, the two pieces can certainly be associated, as they both rely extensively on the *Synonyma* and attest to two different ways of adapting the same Latin source, Vercelli xxii being a coherent homiletic recast of a lengthy selection from the Latin exemplar, while *Warna* is a faithful rendition of a shorter section. As we have seen, Vercelli xxii was more likely translated

from a Latin homiletic piece combining the *Synonyma* with at least one other source, rather than adapted from a pre-existent vernacular version of the Isidorian text.⁷¹ In the case of the Tiberius epitome, the faithfulness of the rendition would seem to point to an *ad hoc* translation from a full text of the *Synonyma* or, alternatively, to the vernacular version of a pre-existent Latin epitome which, however, unlike the exemplar of Vercelli xxii, must have been remarkably close to the Isidorian text. *Warna* also presents a misreading (or mistranslation) equivalent to the *amor/timor* or *iudicat/indicat* cases pointed out by Scragg in Vercelli xxii,⁷² namely the Latin adjective *interna* ([internal], *Synonyma* II, 92), which either the translator misread as *aeterna* [eternal] and rendered as *ecere* (*Warna*, line 34), or else, his Latin exemplar contained the variant reading.

Five other Old English prose passages featuring the *ubi sunt* topos derive from the *Synonyma*. Two occur in two anonymous homilies on the soul-and-body theme, namely the so-called Macarius Homily,⁷³ and the *Sermo Augustini*.⁷⁴ As I have shown elsewhere, these two homilies are of the utmost significance insofar as they arguably attest to the earliest stages of the conflation between the *ubi sunt* topos, as ultimately derived from the *Synonyma*, and the soul-and-body legend in Old English literature.⁷⁵ Intermediate Latin sources for the *ubi sunt* passages of these two homilies have been identified, providing evidence for the sort of textual adaptations and conflations which the *ubi sunt* passage of the *Synonyma* under-went before making its way into the vernacular homiletic production.

In the Macarius Homily, the *ubi sunt* passage is very brief and before Cross's study of 1956 had been traced to the corresponding passage of *Sermo* 68 of the pseudo-Augustinian collection of *Sermones ad fratres in eremo*. In its most recent printed version, this collection consists of seventy-six pieces put together by an anonymous compiler not earlier than the beginning of the eleventh century; this compiler was also apparently the author of many sermons in the collection. However, the original set must have consisted of up to about forty sermons and included much earlier texts, a few of which are genuine works by Augustine, Alcuin, Caesarius, and Jerome.⁷⁶ Cross showed that the *ubi sunt* passage in the Old English homily is closer to a variant version of *Sermo* 68, a

sermon spuriously attributed to Isidore and entitled *Omelia de anima et corpore* and generally known as pseudo-Isidore, *Sermo* 3.⁷⁷ Since the relationship of the *ubi sunt* passage in the Macarius Homily with the corresponding sections of the two spurious Latin *sermones* as well as with their ultimate Isidorian source has already been illustrated by Cross,⁷⁸ I focus here on the relevant Old English passage (lines 54–60):

... forþan, ne ne sculon we næfre sorhlease beon, ac
symble urne deaðes dæg beforan ures lichoman eagam
settan forþan þisre weorolde wuldor is scort and
feallende and fleonde and earme synt þises middaneardes
gestreon. Hwær synt þa cyningas þe geo wæron⁷⁹ and þa
welegan þisse weorolde? Hwær is nu heora gold and
heora hrægelgefrætwodnes?

[And therefore we should never be without sorrow, but
always set the day of our death before the eyes of our
body; for the glory of this world is short, and failing, and
fleeting, and poor are the treasures of this world. Where
are the kings who once were and the wealthy of this
world? Where is now their gold, and their ornamented
garments?]⁸⁰

As can be seen, the *ubi sunt* questions are introduced by a fairly faithful rendering of the opening sentence of *Synonyma* II, 91 ('Breuis est ... temporalis potentia'). In particular, all the Latin adjectives (*breuis*, *modica*, *caduca*, *fragilis*) have been literally translated into Old English, although in a slightly different order, and the two central ones, *fleonde* and *fallende*, are clearly given prominence by alliteration and assonance. In contrast, the syntax has been altered, since the first three Latin *commata* have been summarized into a long clause introduced by *forþan*, and only the noun phrase 'huius saeculi gloria' has been translated into Old English.⁸¹ The opening exhortation to set before our eyes the day of our death also finds an echo in the *Synonyma*: 'Versetur ante oculos tuos imago futuri iudicii, praeuide quae postmodum eris passurus' [the image of the future judgment should stay before your eyes, foresee the things you will suffer afterwards]. The sentence in question, however, occurs in *Synonyma* I, 47,⁸² and is

therefore removed from the *ubi sunt* passage, which occurs in *Synonyma* II, 91.

The Macarius Homily features two *ubi sunt* questions, the first focusing on kings and the rich, the second on their actual wealth and adornments. It can therefore be said that this homily features both forms of the *ubi sunt* topos, namely the one addressing kinds of people, which is the form attested in the *Synonyma*, and the *quid profuit* type, concerning the actual means of earthly power and glory, which is unparalleled in the Isidorian text. However, such a combination of the two forms of the *ubi sunt* topos is not an innovation of the Macarius Homily, since it already features in both intermediate sources identified so far, namely the *Sermo ad fratres* 68 and the pseudo-Isidore, *Sermo* 3. One can compare:

Dic ubi sunt imperatores et reges, ubi duces, principes aut barones, ubi aurum et argentum ac ornamenta eorum? (*Sermo* 68).⁸³

[Say, where are the emperors and the kings, where (are) the generals, the princes or the barons, where (is) their gold and silver and their ornaments?]

Dic, ubi sunt reges, ubi diuites, ubi diuitiae eorum, et ornamenta eorum? (pseudo-Isidore, *Sermo* 3).⁸⁴

[Say, where are the kings, where (are) the rich, where (are) their riches and their ornaments?]

In the *Sermo Augustini*, the *ubi sunt* passage is much lengthier and is introduced as a greatly expanded translation into the vernacular of a Latin tag, which is attributed to Augustine (lines 27–43):⁸⁵

Be þam se halga mann sanctus Augustinus wæs specende iu and þus cwæð: ‘O homo, dic mihi: ubi sunt reges, ubi sunt principes, ubi imperatores qui fuerant ante nos, aut ubi sunt diuites, ubi est aurum et argentum et ornamenta eorum? Ipsi uelut umbra transierunt.’ ‘Sege me, la man, þu þe nu gyt leofast and fela gemunan miht, hwar syndon þa cyningas þe þu iu cupest, and þa ealdormen and þa

caseras and þa rican gerefan, þa þe fela þinga on earmum
mannum mid woge stryndon, and mid wog hi
fordemdon? Gesege me, la, hwar syndon þa nu gesewene,
oððe þa welan þe hig lange gestryned hæfdon, oððe hwar
is þæt gold and þæt seolfer and ealle þa fægeran
frætewunga on gimum and on godewebbum þe hig
begyten hæfdon? Hwar syndon þa nu gesewene? Hu ne
syndon hi ealle gewitene and aweg afaren, swa swa axan
oppe mannes swefn þonne he of slæpe awacnað? La,
hwæt, þæt gold and þæt seolfer and seo frætewung and
eall þæt hi her on þisum middangearde æfter hym to lafe
þurhwunodon a, and þa sylfan lichaman þe þis ær eall
begeaton!’

[Once that holy man, St Augustine, spoke with regard to
this (matter) and said: ‘O man, tell me: where are the
kings, where are the princes, where (are) the emperors
who were before us, or where are the rich, where are
their gold and their silver and their ornaments? They
have passed away like a shadow.’ ‘Tell me, man, you who
are still alive and can remember many things, where are
the kings whom you once knew, and the noble-men and
the Caesars and the wealthy reeves that amassed many
things (by committing) iniquities against the poor, and
condemned them unjustly? Tell me, where are they now
to be seen, or where (are) the riches which they had long
amassed, or where is the gold and the silver and all the
fair ornaments in gems and purple cloth which they had
acquired? Where are they now to be seen? Are they not
all gone and passed away, like ashes or like a man’s
dream when he awakes from sleep? Alas, the gold and
the silver and the ornament(s) and all that they have left
behind them here on this world and the body itself that
once had owned all this!’]

Also for this *ubi sunt* passage the closest antecedent which has been
pointed out is pseudo-Isidore, *Sermo* 3; in particular, Cross argued
that the direct source of the vernacular passage must have been a
variant of the pseudo-Isidorian homily.⁸⁶

Like the *ubi sunt* passage in the Macarius Homily, that in the

Sermo Augustini also conflates the two forms of the *ubi sunt* topos, since the rhetorical questions refer both to people and to their material belongings. An antecedent of such a conflation, as we have seen, can also be found in both pseudo-Isidore, *Sermo* 3 and the *Sermo ad fratres* 68, although the Latin antecedent has obviously been expanded by the Old English homilist. Although in both the Latin tag and the Old English version four kinds of powerful and rich people are mentioned (*reges, principes, imperatores*, and *diuites*, on the one hand, *cyningas, ealdormen, caseras*, and *gerefan*, on the other), in the vernacular the succinct list of the Latin has been expanded by means of relative clauses, which give great vividness and immediacy to the rhetorical questions, as is especially the case with the bullying reeves. Furthermore, the list of earthly riches is enlivened by the addition of colourful details: thus we are told, for example, that the fair ornaments consist of gems and purple vestments. In sum, what in the Latin tag is condensed into one sketchy interrogative sentence is expanded in the Old English version into two long interrogative sentences, where the subjects of the *ubi sunt* questions are given an individual touch by the many qualifying details. As we shall see, an even more detailed and descriptive catalogue of precious commodities will be found in the *ubi sunt* passage of Vercelli x,⁸⁷ of which the *Sermo Augustini* echoes some items, such as *gold* [gold], *seolfer* [silver], *gimmas* [gems], and *godwebb* [fine cloth, purple].⁸⁸ However, I would suggest that the closest parallels to the list of riches and commodities of the *Sermo Augustini* can be found in the *ubi sunt* passage contained in Boniface's *Epistola* 9, which records examples of worldly riches and embellishments in the guise of gold, silver, and gems, as well as fine food and clothes, closely echoing the corresponding catalogue of the *Sermo Augustini*.⁸⁹ In fact *gold*, *seolfer*, and *godwebb* occur together as emblems of worldly treasures in only three other Old English homilies, the textually related homilies Vercelli ii (line 4), Napier xl (183. 8–9), and Napier xlii (196. 22–197. 1), although our triad occurs in independent passages.⁹⁰

Likewise, the final simile in the Latin tag ('Ipsi uelut umbra transierunt') is expanded and rendered into another rhetorical question, being replaced by two similes which seem to be an original innovation of the Old English homilist ('swa swa axan ... awacnað'), and by a long expression – again unparalleled in the

Latin – of regret and nostalgia for what is gone forever ('La ... beageaton'). As Cross noted, within *ubi sunt* passages 'a change in concluding simile need cause no surprise,'⁹¹ and, as we shall see, such variation of the concluding simile is indeed a frequent feature of the *ubi sunt* passages in Old English. In this case the *ubi sunt* topos has clearly struck a chord with the homilist, resulting in evocative images, such as that of the ashes or of those who have gone far away, and especially that of the sleep vanishing from the one who has just been awakened.

The tendency towards expansion so evident in the *Sermo Augustini* has been classified by Cross as typical of the way Old English homilists treated their Latin sources for the *ubi sunt* topos.⁹² In so doing, the Anglo-Saxons either could draw on a stock convention that, given the popularity of the topos, was vast and well established,⁹³ or could imaginatively rework a motif which quite naturally lent itself to expansion.⁹⁴ The latter seems to have been the case with the homilist responsible for the compilation of the *Sermo Augustini*, since certain additions, such as that concerning the corrupt reeves⁹⁵ or the simile of the ashes and the dream, appear original expansions of commonplace, Latinate material.

Cross considered another three prose *ubi sunt* passages ultimately dependent on the *Synonyma*, namely Vercelli x,⁹⁶ Napier xlix,⁹⁷ and Irvine vii,⁹⁸ the latter two both being variants of the *ubi sunt* passage in Vercelli x.⁹⁹ In total, Vercelli x is attested in no fewer than eight manuscript witnesses and in at least nine textual variants, whether complete or partial.¹⁰⁰ The number and relative dating of these versions clearly show that this homily must have been very popular among compilers of composite homilies for as long as two centuries at the end of the Old English period. In particular, the part of Vercelli x which was most often excerpted and adapted was the second part, from line 122 to the end of Scragg's edition, which makes up an independent piece in CCC 302 and London, BL, Cotton Faustina A.ix.¹⁰¹ Two excerpts from Vercelli x, both containing the *ubi sunt* passage, are part of two composite homilies, namely Napier xxx,¹⁰² and Irvine vii; in fact, the latter homily contains two *ubi sunt* passages, the second of which is a variant of the Vercelli one.¹⁰³ In sum, the *ubi sunt* passage, which occurs in the last quarter of Vercelli x (lines 200–

45 of Scragg's edition), is contained in no fewer than seven of the nine variant versions of the Vercelli homily.¹⁰⁴

The *ubi sunt* passage in Vercelli x is the most extensive elaboration of this topos in Old English and relies on *Synonyma* II, 89–91, which Scragg largely reprints in his *apparatus fontium*.¹⁰⁵ Apart from the stylistic divergences between the variants of Vercelli x as highlighted by Wilcox,¹⁰⁶ on the whole it can be said that the vernacular homilist follows his Latin source quite closely, 'though tending always towards expansion and prolixity.'¹⁰⁷ Such expansions are often achieved by means of a balanced tautological style that makes occasional use of two-stress rhythmical phrases.¹⁰⁸ In general, 'the care devoted to rhythm and style detected in [Vercelli x] is striking,'¹⁰⁹ and it is significant that such an artfully crafted text as the *Synonyma* should feature among the sources of this homily. As far as the *ubi sunt* passage in particular is concerned, the compiler of Vercelli x, not unlike that of the *Sermo Augustini*, elaborates this topos in a way which is not only homiletic and moralizing, but also imaginative and lyric.

The section of Vercelli x depending on the *Synonyma* can be considered to be a homily embedded within the main homily.¹¹⁰ Indeed, many of the additions and alterations introduced into the vernacular version are due to the compiler's conscious intent to adapt his source for a homiletic purpose. So the passage opens with the homiletic doublet *ongitan* ⁊ *oncnawan* (line 200) – which occurs again in a chiasmic pattern in line 209 (*oncnawan* ⁊ *ongitan*) – introducing the meditation on earthly power and riches. As numerous studies on Old English rhetoric show, such repetitions confer cohesion to a given text and are used to earmark stylistic and thematic units within it.¹¹¹ Here, if the former occurrence of the verb doublet introduces some general meditations on the transience of earthly life, the second brings in *exempla* that illustrate those maxims with images from the natural world.¹¹² I quote the relevant passage, maintaining Scragg's lineation:

200 Hwæt, we nu magon be þysan ongitan oncnawan þæt se
æelmihtiga God nele þæt his gifena man þanc nyte. Ne
ðurfon we þæs wenan þæt he us nelle þara leana
gemanigan þe he us her on eorðan to gode forgifed. Emne
swa he us mærlýcor gifeð, swa we him mærlýcor þancian
sculon, a swa þrymlycor ar swa mare eadmodnes. Þam

205 þe dryhten mycel syleð, myceles he hine eac eft manað.
þam þe he micel to forlæteð, mycel he to þam seceð.
Æghwylc heah ham her in worulde bið mid frecennesse
ymbseald. Emne swa ða woruldgeþingu bioð maran, swa
bioð þa frecennessa swiðran. Swa ge magon bi ðan þa
bysene oncnawan ongitan: ...

[Lo, we may now perceive and understand by this that the almighty God does not wish that man should neglect thanks for his gifts. We need not expect that; namely, that he will not wish to remind us of those rewards which he gives to us here on earth as goods. The more generously he gives us, the more greatly we must thank him, ever the more glorious the honour the more humility. The one to whom the Lord gives much, much will he also again admonish him. From the one to whom he grants much, much will he seek from him. Every lofty home here in the world is beset with danger. Just as the greater are the wordly things, the greater are the dangers. So you may by this example understand and perceive: ...]¹¹³

Worldly riches are presented as God's generous gifts for which men should be adequately grateful; however, those who have been endowed with riches and glory in this life should not become excessively proud of them, because they are inherently fleeting and calamitous. Also, the one who has been given more will be asked for more. In the *Synonyma*, these two principles are clearly expressed (II, 89):¹¹⁴

Potentes autem potenter tormenta patientur (Sap. VI, 7).
Iudicium enim durissimum in iis qui praesunt fiet (Luc.
XII, 48). Cui multum datur, multum ab eo quaeritur; cui
plus committitur, plus ab eo exigitur.

[But the powerful ones will mightily suffer torments (Wisdom VI, 7). Indeed, judgment will be most severe for those who are prominent (Luke XII, 48). From the one to whom much is given, much is asked; from the one to whom more is allotted, more is required.]

Indeed, besides slightly altering the wording of the biblical sentences, the latest printed edition attributes to Luke what is actually a quotation from Wisdom VI, 6 (*recte* ‘iudicium durissimum in iis qui praesunt fiet’), while the evangelical quotation is the sentence which immediately follows (*recte*: ‘omni autem cui multum datum est multum quaeretur ab eo et cui commendauerunt multum plus petent ab eo’ [indeed from everyone to whom much has been given, much will be asked, and from the one to whom they have entrusted much, they will require more]). In Vercelli x neither of the two quotations is identified as such. Their sequence is inverted and while the sentence from Luke is rendered faithfully (lines 203–6), the gnomic character of the quotation from Wisdom VI, 6 is freely expanded and personalized by the reference to the home fraught with disgrace (lines 206–7).¹¹⁵ It might be worth noting that the two biblical citations occur jointly also in Anglo- and Hiberno-Latin texts, such as the *Collectanea pseudo-Bedae*,¹¹⁶ one of the epistles addressed to Boniface,¹¹⁷ the *Poenitentiale Cummeani*,¹¹⁸ and pseudo-Cyprian, *De XII abusiuus saeculi*.¹¹⁹

In the *Synonyma*, the quotation from Wisdom is illustrated by four quasi-similes, concerning a tall tree and its branches, lofty towers, and high mountains (*Synonyma* II, 89):¹²⁰

Alta arbor a uentis fortius agitatur, et rami eius citius in
ruina confringuntur; excelsae turres grauiori casu
procumbunt. Altissimi montes crebris fulminibus
feriuntur.

[A tall tree is shaken more vigorously by the winds, and its branches are more rapidly broken in a downfall; lofty towers tumble down with a heavier fall. The highest mountains are struck by frequent lightnings.]

Each of the four quasi-similes is expressed by one short gnomic *comma*, all but the second linked to the others asyndetically. In the Old English homily, the first, third, and fourth of the Latin *commata* are expanded into three brief but effective *exempla* (lines 208–18), consciously introduced as such by the homilist (‘ge magon bi ðan þa **bysene** oncnawan 7 ongitan’ [you may by this **example** understand and perceive]). I quote the relevant passage

in full:

208 ... Swa ge magon bi ðan

þa bysene oncnawan 7 ongitan: þæt treow, þonne hit
geweaxeð on ðam

210 wudubearwe 7 hit hlifað up ofer þa oðre ealle 7 brædeþ,

7 hit þonne se stranga wind gestandeð, hit bið swiðlicor
geweged 7 geswenced þonne se oðer wuda. Swa bið eac
gelic be ðam hean clifum 7 torrum, þonne 7 hie feorran
ofer ða oðre eorþan hlifað, hie þonne semninga feallan
onginnap 7 ful heardlice hriosað to foldan. Swylce eac be

215 ðam micelum muntum 7 dunum, þa þe hyhst standap 7

goriað ofer ealne middangeard, þeahhwæðere hi wite
habbað þæs ealdordomes þæt hie bioð geneahhe mid
heofon fyre 7 geþread 7

218 geþræsted, 218 geslægen mid lige.

[So you may by that example understand and perceive:
that tree, when it grows in the forest and it towers up
over all the others and spreads out, and when the strong
wind assails it, is more violently moved and troubled
than the other (trees) of the forest. So it is also, likewise,
concerning those high cliffs and crags, when they tower
far above the other land, and then they suddenly begin to
fall and they very harshly crash to the ground. It is also
so with those great mountains and heights, which stand
highest and tower over all the earth and, nevertheless,
have the penalty of that pre-eminence, in that they are
often afflicted and threatened with hot fire and
tormented with flame.]

Here again the gnomic character of the Latin gives way to a highly personalized, lyric description of the natural elements, achieved by means of emotive language. One may note, in particular, the use of intensifying adverbs (*swiðlicor*, *ful heardlice*); of doublets, especially of verbs, linked by sound effects such as alliteration, assonance, and rhyme (*geweged geswenced*, *standap goriað*, *geþread geþræsted*, *hreasap feallað*); finally, of adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases denoting strength, height, and spatial expansion (*ofer þa oðre ealle*, *stranga*, *hean*, *feorran ofer ða oðre eorþan*, *micel*, *hyst*, *ofer*

ealne middangeard).

A clear symptom of the homiletic adaptation of the Latin source is represented by the Old English homilist's eschatological interpretation of what is purely immanent in the *Synonyma*. We have already had the opportunity to point out such a shift towards the afterlife in Vercelli xxii.¹²¹ Likewise, in Vercelli x the agent responsible for the rapid destruction of all earthly pleasures and commodities is explicitly identified in *se bitera deaþ* ([bitter death], line 228), while in the *Synonyma* it is the envy and ill-will of one's fellow human beings that are blamed. Hints at the dangers and ills menacing earthly pomp can be found from lines 206–7 on,¹²² but the explicit reference to death is made after a fulsome catalogue of earthly precious things (lines 220–9):¹²³

220 ... Þeah we þysse worulde glenga

tiligen swiðe ⁊ we in wuldre scinan swiðe, ⁊ þeah we us
scurpen mid þam readdestan godewebbe ⁊ gefrætewigen
mid ðam biorhtestan golde, ⁊ mid þam diorwyrðan
gimstanum utan ymbhon, hwæðere he sceal in nearonesse
ende gebidan. ⁊ þeah þa strengestan ⁊ þa ricestan

225 hatan him reste gewyrcean of marmanstane ⁊ of oðrum
goldfrætewum, mid gimcynnum eal astæned ⁊ mid
seolfrenum ruwum ⁊ beddum eal oferwreon, ⁊ mid
dieorwyrðum wrytgemengnessum eall geseted ⁊ mid
goldleafum geþread ymbutan, hwæðere se bitera deaþ þæt
todæleð

229 eall.

[Although we strive mightily for this world's honours and we are very resplendent in glory, and although we clothe ourselves with the finest purple cloth, and adorn (ourselves) with the brightest gold, and deck (ourselves) out with precious gemstones; nevertheless he must await the end in anxiety. And although the richest and most powerful order beds of marble-stone to be built for themselves and of other gold ornaments and all studded with precious gems and covered with silver tapestry and mattresses and all prepared with precious perfumes and worked over with goldleaf; nevertheless, bitter death will take all that away.]

Coming at the end of such a catalogue, therefore, the revelation that death is the blind, destructive force which brings to an end anything worldly is given a heightened, climactic effect. This disclosure, however, is skilfully anticipated within the catalogue of costly items, when the sumptuous *ræste* (line 225) of the rich man is described. In fact, the Old English word translating the Latin *lectus* is deliberately ambiguous, since *ræste* can mean both ‘bed’ and ‘grave,’ and interestingly, in the variant version of the Vercelli x *ubi sunt* passage contained in Napier xxx, the ambiguity is resolved in favour of the straightforward *byrgen* [grave, burial].¹²⁴ The eschatological dimension will then be made even more explicit in the very closing lines of this *ubi sunt* passage, where the fleetingness of earthly joys is related to the separation of the soul from the body, and the subsequent judgment by God (lines 244–5):

244 Swa tealte syndon eorðan dreamas, swa todæleð lic
sawle. Þonne

245 is us uncuð hu se dema ymb þæt gedon wylle.

[So unstable are earthly joys, and so body and soul part.
Then it is unknown to us how the Judge will act
concerning that.]

Interestingly, the eternal Judge, whose intents and decisions are unknown to men, is implicitly contrasted with the judges of *this* world, who are mentioned a few lines earlier as subjects of one of the *ubi sunt* questions (lines 235–7) and whose pomp is perishable and liable to be abased and punished after death.¹²⁵ Thereby, the dichotomy between this world and the next is artfully restated, and the whole *ubi sunt* section of Vercelli x can be said to develop coherently from the *her in worulde* of the beginning (lines 205–6 and 218), to the end of earthly life and its otherworldly destiny.

The long catalogue of precious objects which are subject to the destructive power of death represents a logical preamble to the *ubi sunt* questions (lines 233–41):

233 ... Hwær syndon þa rican caseras ⁊ cyningas þa þe gio
wæron, oððe þa cyningas þe we io cuðon? Hwær syndon
þa

235 ealdormen þa þe bebodu setton? Hwær is demera

domstow? Hwær is hira ofermetto, butan mid moldan
beþeahte ⁊ in witu gecyrred? Wa is woruldescriptum,¹²⁶
butan hie mid rihte reccen. Nis þam leornerum na sel
þonne leornendum, butan hie mid rihte domas secen.
Hwær coman middangeardes gestreon? Hwær com
worulde wela? Hwær cwom

240 foldan fægernes? Hwær coman þa þe geornlicost æhta
tiledon ⁊ oðrum eft yrfe læfdon?

[Where are the powerful Caesars and the kings who once
were, or the kings whom we once knew? And where are
the aldermen who made decrees? Where is the tribunal
of judges? Where is their pride, but covered with dust
and turned in to punishments? Woe is to the judges of
the world, unless they decide rightly. It is no better for
the teachers than for the students unless they seek
judgments with truth. Where have the earth's treasures
gone? Where has the world's prosperity gone? Where has
the earth's fairness gone? Where have those gone who
most zealously tilled the lands and afterwards left a
legacy to others?]

As can be seen, this passage includes two sets of *ubi sunt* questions which are separated by two gnomic sentences concerning the categories of judges, teachers, and students (lines 236–8). The first series of questions conforms to the most common formulation of the *ubi sunt* topos, as it concerns kinds of people, that is the *caseras*, *cyningas*, *ealdormen*. This series then concludes with two questions which strictly speaking concern the ‘hall of the judges’ (*demera domstow*), and their pomp (*ofermetto*), but I would argue that the understood subject is again a category of people, that is the judges. With the exception of the latter two questions, the first series of *ubi sunt* questions in Vercelli x follow the Isidorian antecedent quite closely, not only for the categories of people mentioned, but also because they faithfully translate the *ubi est/ubi sunt* formula of the Latin source into the Old English *hwær is / hwær syndon* formula.

By contrast, the second series of *ubi sunt* questions (lines 238–41) belongs to the *quid profuit* tradition, since they focus on earthly

riches and beauty. Admittedly, the last of these four questions concerns those who amassed possessions during their lives only to leave them in bequest to others, but again the stress is on the properties rather than on their owners. More importantly, this second series of *ubi sunt* questions does not have a precise antecedent in the *Synonyma*, and does not share the *ubi est / ubi sunt* formula of the Latin source, but features the alternative formula *hwær com/hwær coman* instead. The use of the latter formula, unparalleled in the Isidorian text, can therefore be considered an intentional and artful *uariatio* on the part of the Anglo-Saxon homilist, embellishing his source with other elaborations available within the vast repertoire of the topos.

The *hwær com* formula is not unique to Vercelli x and its variants, but recurs in at least three more Old English texts, namely Blickling viii,¹²⁷ Assmann xiv (the *ubi sunt* passage of which is an abridged version of the one in Blickling viii),¹²⁸ the first *ubi sunt* passage in Irvine vii,¹²⁹ Blickling x,¹³⁰ and *The Wanderer*.¹³¹ I quote the *ubi sunt* passage from Blickling viii in full (99. 23–101. 1):

Ac hwyder gewiton þa welan, & þa glengas, & þa idlan
 blissa? opþe hwyder gewiton þa mycclan weorod þe him
 ymb ferdon & stodon? & hwær syndon þa þe hie heredan,
 & him olyhtword sprecan? & hwær com seo frætwodnes
 heora husa & seo gesomnung þara deorwyrþra gimma,
 opþe þæt unsmæte gestreon goldes & seolfres, opþe eal se
 wela þe him dæghwamlice gesamnodan ma & ma, &
 nystan ne ne gemdon hwonne hie þæt eall anforlætan
 sceoldan? opþe hwær com heora snyttro & seo orþonce
 glaunes, & se þe þa gebregdnan domas demde? & seo
 wlitignes heora ræsta & setla, opþe seo manigfealde
 licetung heora freonda, & seo mycclen menigo heora
 þeowa, & seo scylfring heora leohtfata þe him beforan
 burnon, & ealle þa mycclan þreatas þe him mid ferdon &
 embþrungon? Ealle þa syndon nu from heora eagam
 gewitene[.]

[But where have the riches, and the adornments, or the
 vain pleasures gone? or where have the great throngs
 that went with them and surrounded them gone? And

where are those who praised them, and spoke to them flattering words? And where have the adorning of their houses gone, and the collection of precious gems, or the vast acquisition of gold and of silver, or all the wealth which they amassed daily, more and more, and knew not nor took heed of the time when they should leave all? Or where have their wisdom and their ingenious skill gone? And (where is) he who gave false judgments? And where is the splendour of their beds and their couches, or the manifold dissembling of their friends, and the great multitude of their servants, and the fretwork of their lamps which burned before them, and all the great crowds that went with and thronged about them? All those are now gone from their eyes.]¹³²

This passage attests to yet a further variation of the *ubi sunt* topos in the hands of an Old English homilist. Indeed, the six questions making up the passage are at clear variance with each other, insofar as the first two open with the formula *hwyder gewiton*, which is unique to this *ubi sunt* passage;¹³³ the third features the common formula *hwær syndon*; the fourth and the fifth open with the *hwær com* formula; finally, the sixth question is elliptical (but clearly understands *hwær com*) and consists of a climactic series of noun phrases – the last two of which are further expanded by relative clauses – denoting all the comforts and people that death bluntly snatches away from the world.

Cross identified the source of the *ubi sunt* passage in Blickling viii with a lengthy section within pseudo-Augustine, *Sermo ad fratres* 58, or, more likely, a close variant of it.¹³⁴ Nearly all of the *ubi sunt* questions in the Latin *sermo* are elliptical, with the important exception of the first of them, which reads: ‘Ubi ergo abierunt illa omnia?’ [where did all those things go?], and of the third, which opens with the conventional *ubi sunt* formula: ‘Ubi modo sunt illi, qui eum in furibundis agminibus constipabant, qui domi forisque laudabant?’ [where are those who crowded around him in raging mobs, who flattered him in private and in public?]. As Cross noted, Blickling viii follows the Latin source quite closely, though not slavishly, especially as far as the nouns are concerned, and the Old English *hwyder gewiton* can be considered to be a very faithful translation of the Latin *ubi abierunt*. In turn the Old English

hwær com, which has no antecedent in the Latin, can be considered as a synonymical variation of *hwyder gewiton* on the part of the Old English homilist.¹³⁵

It is noteworthy that the *ubi sunt* passage in Blickling viii is introduced by an exhortation to go and visit the tombs of wealthy men, since they represent a most effective example of the vanity and fleetingness of earthly riches (99. 12–23):

‘Ic eow halsige,’ cwæþ Agustinus, ‘þæt ge gongan to byrgenne weligra manna, þonne magon ge geseon sweotole bysene. [’] Hie wæron welige on þyssum middangearde, & heora wlenca wæron swiþe monigfealde on landum & on wingearðum, & heora hordernu wæron mid monigfealdum wlencum gefylde, & heora bliss & heora plegan wæron swiðe genihtsume. Behealdað nu georne eall þæt is from heora eagum gewiten. Hie hæfdon manige glengas deorwyrþra hræglas. Eac swylce hie hæfdon wif & cyfesa, & heora fyrenlustas, & wiste, & plegan, & oforgedrync, & dys-lice & unrædlice halsunga; & mislice blissa hie hæfdon on hiora gedrynce; & heora underngereordu & æfengereordu hie mengdon togædere.

[‘I entreat you,’ said Augustine, ‘that you go to the tombs of rich men, and then you may see a plain example (of the vanity of the riches).’ They were wealthy in this world, and their riches were very many in lands and vineyards; and their store-houses were filled with manifold riches, and their bliss and their amusements were very abundant. Behold now diligently that all is gone from their eyes. They had many adornments of precious garments. They had also wives and concubines, and their lustful indulgences, and feasts, and sports, and excessive drinkings, and foolish and ill-advised embraces. And they had diverse blisses in their drinkings, and they mingled together their morning and evening feasts.]¹³⁶

The memory of all the comforts and pleasures the rich ones have enjoyed during their life on earth naturally triggers the *ubi sunt* questions which immediately follow, and the verbal repetitions in

the two passages strengthen the continuity of content and inspiration between them. Cognate words, mainly nouns and adjectives, occur repeatedly in the two passages: see, for example, *blis* (99. 17, 22, and 24); *welig* and *wela* (99. 13, 14, 24, and 29); *manigfeald* (99. 15, 16, and 33); and *deorwyrþe* (99. 19, and 28). Furthermore, the catalogue of the comforts and sensual pleasures enjoyed by those who are now dead (99. 14–23) is divided into two halves by the gnomic sentence: ‘Behealdað **nu** georne **eall** þæt is **from heora eagum gewiten**’, which clearly echoes the phrase concluding the series of *ubi sunt* questions: ‘**Ealle** þa syndon **nu from heora eagum gewitene**’ (99. 36–101. 1).

One of the earliest attestations of the motif of the injunction to visit the tomb and of the warning from the dead is contained in the so-called *Necrosima*, a collection of funeral hymns attributed to Ephraem of Syria, where the morbid indulgence in the description of the most revolting aspects of death is applied to the abasement of the values of this world.¹³⁷ The motif of the warning from the dead was then variously adopted and adapted by both eastern and western Fathers and it eventually developed into an exemplum, which, because of its great didactic effectiveness, was repeatedly drawn on in medieval preaching.¹³⁸ Not surprisingly, the injunction to visit the tomb and the related description of decay came to be associated with the *ubi sunt* topos, as is the case, for example, with a treatise by John Chrysostom,¹³⁹ or with Caesarius of Arles’s *De elemosinis*.¹⁴⁰ As Cross has demonstrated, the latter *sermo* is the major patristic source for the grave’s warning about the transience of earthly life in Old English homilies.¹⁴¹ In this text, Caesarius provides a ‘forceful variation’ of the warning from the dead,¹⁴² since the warning is presented as a direct address of the dead man’s bones to the homilist’s audience, rather than as a personal meditation by the homilist himself.

In Caesarius’s *De elemosinis* the *ubi sunt* questions introduce the corpse’s address, and this passage was a source for at least two Old English homilies:

Rogo uos, fratres, aspiciate ad sepulchra diuitum, et quotiens iuxta illa transitis, considerate et diligenter inspicite, ubi sunt illorum diuitiae, ubi ornamenta, ubi anuli uel inaures, ubi diademata pretiosa, ubi honorum

uanitas, ubi luxoriae uoluptas, ubi spectacula uel furiosa
uel cruenta uel turpia. Certe transierunt omnia tamquam
umbra[.]¹⁴³

[I ask you, brothers, look upon the graves of the rich men, and whenever you pass by them, ponder and consider diligently where their riches are, where (their) ornaments, where (their) rings or earrings, where (their) precious diadems, where the vanity of honours, where the lust of wantonness, where the insane or cruel or base shows. Certainly they all passed away like a shadow.]

This *ubi sunt* passage evidently focuses on the material goods and sensual pleasures and, unlike the corresponding passage from the *Synonyma*, can therefore be traced to the *quid profuit* tradition. Both Caesarius's and Isidore's *ubi sunt* passages, however, use the 'standard' *ubi sunt/ubi est* formula, and both conclude with the shadow simile.

The section of Caesarius's *De elemosinis* containing the *ubi sunt* questions and the speech of the dead to the living was inserted, with little change, into *Sermo ad fratres* 66,¹⁴⁴ and an injunction to visit the tomb of the rich – not including, however, a direct address of the dead to the living – features also in *Sermo* 58 of the same collection.¹⁴⁵ As we have seen, the latter *sermo* is the source of the *ubi sunt* passage in Blickling viii, and the long exhortation to visit other people's graves in the Old English homily can also be traced, in spite of some discrepancies, to the same *Sermo* 58.¹⁴⁶ It has been argued that the passage immediately preceding the warning from the dead in Blickling viii (99. 5–12) must be based directly or indirectly on the corresponding passage in Caesarius' *De elemosinis*.¹⁴⁷ However, as Étaix has shown, *Sermo* 58 is earlier than Caesarius's *sermo* and circulated in numerous variant versions, one of which was known to and possibly drawn on by Caesarius himself for his *De elemosinis*.¹⁴⁸ Cross's conclusions as to the relationship between the *ubi sunt* passage in Blickling viii and the corresponding one in *Sermo* 58 can therefore be confirmed,¹⁴⁹ and it can be inferred that the immediate antecedent of the Old English homily most likely was a version of *Sermo* 58 slightly different from that in the printed edition.

Caesarius's address of the dead was rendered comparatively faithfully in two Old English homilies, namely Vercelli xiii and Irvine vii; thirdly, Blickling homily x features a more radical adaptation of Caesarius's text, insofar as the motif of the warning from the dead is recast into a new, unparalleled exemplum. The three homilies in question have been shown by Cross to be independent versions derived from the same ultimate source. However, Vercelli xiii and Irvine vii agree in that the ability of the bones to speak remains potential, while in Caesarius's sermon they are really able to speak to those who are willing to listen to them.¹⁵⁰

Vercelli xiii is a unique homily for Wednesday in Rogationtide, of which only the beginning and the end survive because of the loss of a folio.¹⁵¹ The address to the living of the bones in the grave translates quite literally the Latin source and occurs at the beginning of the latter fragment containing the closing of the homily (lines 21–34). Being a unique compilation, it is a matter of speculation whether, following its Latin source, Vercelli xiii contained an *ubi sunt* passage before the injunction of the bones. Certainly, the injunction is immediately preceded by a rhetorical question analogous to an *ubi sunt* one and by the familiar simile of the shadow (lines 19–21), which, interestingly, is found in the original Caesarean *ubi sunt* passage, but is missing in both *Sermo* 58 and *Sermo* 66:

Hwæt wunaþ þysses mid ðam men ofer hydum in ðære
byrgenne, nemþe ðas seonuwa þara bana dust in þære
eorðan? – gewiteð swa swa glidende scuwa.

[What remains of this with the proud man, over his skin,
in the grave, except the sinews and dust of the bones in
the earth? It passes just as (a) gliding shadow.]¹⁵²

Irvine vii is a late composite homily, combining the last third of Vercelli x with material derived 'almost certainly' from another homily.¹⁵³ The section of Irvine vii derived from Vercelli x makes up approximately the second half of the text (corresponding to lines 94–167 of Irvine's edition), and it includes a version of the *ubi sunt* passage and the closing of the Vercelli homily. As to the first half of Irvine vii (lines 1–93), it does not survive as an

independent compilation, but it must have existed as such and the compiler of Irvine vii drew on the last part of it, even copying its closing formula, before inserting the section from Vercelli x. Although ‘the actual juxtaposition of one [homily] to the other is rather clumsy,’¹⁵⁴ thematically the two texts fit rather well together, because they both deal with the transience of earthly riches and with eschatological concerns. In particular, the homily that makes up the first part of Irvine vii features Caesarius’s exemplum of the injunction from the grave, with the relevant *ubi sunt* passage (lines 1–21); it then moves on to an elaborate description of Doomsday, including the two speeches addressed by the Lord to the righteous and the sinful souls (lines 22–62); finally, the closing meditation returns to the fleetingness and frailty of human nature (lines 63–93).

Irvine vii, therefore, contains two *ubi sunt* passages, the first ultimately derived from Caesarius’s sermon, the second from the *Synonyma*. The former can be described as a close, but abridged version of the Latin source, since Caesarius’s detailed catalogue of precious items is synthesized into one indirect question (lines 1–6):

Ic eow bidde, leofe men, þæt swa ofte swa ge faren bi
ricre monnæ burines þæt ge sceawiaen and asmegen
hwær heoræ wælan beoð bicumene, and heore gold, and
heore þegenscypæs, and heore worldprude þære
ydelnesse. Hwi nyte ge þæt all þæt tofaræð and toglit swa
swa monnes sceadu dæþ, and heore worldþrym swa rice
gedwæscte, and gedwan, and aidlode, and afulode?

[I beseech you, dear men, that whenever you pass by the grave of a rich man, you consider and ponder where their wealth is gone, and their gold and their thaneship and the vanity of their world-pomp. Why do not you know that death disperses and dissipates all that like a man’s shadow, and their world-glory is so mightily extinguished and diminished and made useless and foul.]

The Old English text is faithful to its Latin antecedent insofar as it also features material commodities in accordance with the *quid profuit* tradition, and it concludes with the shadow simile. As has been shown above, the latter is found in both the *Synonyma* and

Caesarius's *De elemosinis*; this Old English passage is, however, unique in specifying that it is a man's shadow (*monnes sceadu*). It can be noted that while in the Latin source the questions are introduced by the familiar *ubi sunt* formula, Irvine vii features instead the *hwær com* formula ('hwær ... beoð bicumene'). The compiler of Irvine vii, then, has departed from his Latin source and has presumably drawn on the extant vernacular tradition of the *ubi sunt* topos, as the instance of the *hwær com* formula, unparalleled in Caesarius, seems to show.

The second *ubi sunt* passage in Irvine vii is a variant version of the corresponding section in Vercelli x, which has been analysed in detail above.¹⁵⁵ Although preserved in a much later codex than the Vercelli Book and the two Cambridge manuscripts collated for Napier xlix,¹⁵⁶ the relevant section in Irvine vii has been demonstrated to derive 'from an independent copy of the [Old English] archetype and [to be] valuable for readings where the three older manuscripts differ.'¹⁵⁷ Irvine has also noted that this variant of the Vercelli x *ubi sunt* passage features a unique interpolation (lines 129–31) with an exhortation to the confessors (*weorldscryftum*) to teach rightly and to the laity to obey their confessors.¹⁵⁸ Such an interpolation seems to have developed from an erroneous interpretation on the part of the compiler of Irvine vii of the word *weorldscryftum* as 'confessors,' and indeed Irvine translates the word as such,¹⁵⁹ while in Vercelli x the same word indicates 'secular judges' and indeed occurs in a context where the judges of this world are referred to.¹⁶⁰

Blickling homily x is a third Old English homily indebted to Caesarius's *De elemosinis*.¹⁶¹ Unlike Vercelli xiii and Irvine vii, which are both close renderings of the Latin source, Blickling x features a radical adaptation of Caesarius's exemplum. In the Blickling homily, the address of the bones is not directed to an unspecified audience of sinners, but to a relative of the dead who had gone into voluntary exile from unbearable grief at his kinsman's death. Now the bones from the grave comfort him in his deep mourning and encourage him to pursue a purely spiritual life and pray for his relative's soul, which he eventually succeeds in saving from eternal punishment thanks to his virtue. As Cross has demonstrated, in spite of the obvious differences, the exemplum in Blickling x derives from Caesarius, and so does the *ubi sunt* passage

that precedes the exemplum.¹⁶² I quote the relevant passage from Blickling x (111. 33–113. 2):

Hwær beoþ þonne his welan & his wista? hwær beoð
þonne his wlencea & his anmedlan? hwær beoþ þonne
his idlan gescyrplan? hwær beoþ ðonne þa glengeas & þa
mycclan gegyrelan þe he þone lichoman ær mid
frætweode? hwær cumað þonne his willan & his
fyrenlustas ðe he her on worlde beeode?

[Where then shall his riches and his feasts be? Where
then shall his pride and his arrogance be? Where then
shall his vain garments be? Where then shall the
ornaments and great attire be, with which he previously
decked his body? Where then shall his will and his lusts
be, which he followed here in the world?]¹⁶³

Like the corresponding passages in Irvine vii and in the ultimate Latin source, Caesarius's *De elemosinis*, the Blickling *ubi sunt* passage can be said to belong to the *quid profuit* tradition, since its emphasis is on material goods or abstract nouns denoting pomp and sensual pleasures. As Cross has shown, however, the Blickling passage is closer than Irvine vii to the wording of the Latin, especially to the version in *Sermo ad fratres* 66.¹⁶⁴ There are the usual expansions in Old English – one of the most notable being the doublet *welan and wista* [wealth and feasts], where only *welan* has an antecedent in the Latin *diuitiae*, while *wista* is an expansion prompted by alliteration.¹⁶⁵ Finally, an interesting innovation on the part of the compiler of Blickling x is the combination of the *hwær is* and the *hwær com* formulas, since the latter is unparalleled in the Latin source; the use of both formulas must, therefore, be explained in terms of variation within the available stock of vernacular *ubi sunt* phrases.

For two *ubi sunt* prose passages, namely the one in Blickling homily v and the one in Vercelli iv, Cross did not identify any specific source, although he was certain about their ultimately Latinate derivation.¹⁶⁶ Blickling v is a Lent homily of hortatory and penitential content,¹⁶⁷ including a lengthy description of some categories of damned souls inhabiting hell, in particular the

wicked judges, and a final catalogue of grave sins. The *ubi sunt* passage occurs approximately in the middle of the homily, as a climactic conclusion to a meditation on the transitory state of man, compared to the nature of flowers and plants, which soon wither away with the summer heat.¹⁶⁸ I quote the relevant passage (59. 15–21):

Hwær bið la þonne se idla lust, & seo swetnes þæs
hæmedþinges þe he ær hatheortlice lufode? Hwær beoþ
þonne þa symbelnessa, & þa idelnessa, & þa
ungemetlican hleahtas, & se leasa gylp, & ealle þa idlan
word þe he ær unrihtlice ut forlet? Ealle þa gewitaþ swa
swa wolcn, & swa swa wæteres stream, & ofer þæt
nahwær eft ne æteowaþ.

[Where shall the vain wantonness be then, and the
sweetnesses of the carnal lust which he previously loved
so heartily? Where shall the feastings be then, and the
vanities, and the immoderate laughter, and the false
vaunting, and all the idle words to which he aforetime
wickedly gave utterance? All those shall pass away as a
cloud and as a stream of water, and shall never again
make their appearance.]¹⁶⁹

McCord subsequently identified the source for this passage in a spurious text known as *Admonitio ad filium spiritualem*,¹⁷⁰ which she attributed to St Basil.¹⁷¹ In fact the authorship as well as the place and date of composition of the *Admonitio* are disputed.¹⁷² Its dating has been reckoned to fall between the fifth and the seventh century and its author has been variously identified with the Greek Father St Basil or one of his disciples or with an anonymous compiler in the French monastery of Lérins. There is not even any agreement whether it was first composed in Latin or in Greek and eventually translated into Latin, presumably by Rufinus; the text, however, has survived only in Latin. The *Admonitio* was well known to the Anglo-Saxons, since Ælfric made a translation of it into Old English which survives incomplete.¹⁷³ Furthermore, the *Admonitio* must have been known in Anglo-Saxon England by means of excerpts contained in the *Liber scintillarum*; such extracts are generally presented under the name of St Basil and only twice

are attributed to Cyprian.¹⁷⁴ Indeed a recension of the *Admonitio* (*incipit* ‘Fili patientiam arripe’), shorter than the one edited by Lehmann, is uniquely attested as a prologue to the *Liber scintillarum* in ms. Paris, BN, lat. 133 (s. xi/xii).¹⁷⁵

The *ubi sunt* passage of the *Admonitio* is contained in chapter viii, *De saeculi amore fugiendo*, and reads:

Ubi est postmodum illa omnis oblectatio? Require, si est alicubi pristini decoris aliquod uestigium. Ubi est suauitas luxuriae et conuiuiorum opulentia? Ubi sunt blandimentorum uerba, quae corda simplicia molliabant? Ubi sunt sermones dulces, qui amaritudinem amantibus infudebunt? Ubi est immoderatus risus ac iocus turpis? Ubi est ineffrenata et inutilis laetitia? Uelut decursus aquarum¹⁷⁶ pertransiens nusquam comparuit. Hic est finis carnis pulchritudinis, quam amabas. Hic oblectationis corporis terminus.¹⁷⁷

[What will soon be of all that delight? Enquire if somewhere there is some vestige of the former comeliness. Where is the sweetness of lust and the opulence of banquets? Where are the words of blandishments, which softened the simple hearts? Where are the sweet speeches which poured bitterness into lovers? Where is the immoderate laughter and shameful joking? Where is the unrestrained and useless mirth? It existed for nothing, like a stream of waters flowing by. Here is the end of the beauty of the flesh, which you loved. Here is the end of the body’s delight(s).]¹⁷⁸

As McCord has shown, the Old English version does not follow its Latin antecedent slavishly, since the order of the items has been altered, and there are what might be called the usual additions (*leasa gylp* and *idlan word*) as well as selections from the Latin source (*blandimentorum uerba* and *sermones dulces* are translated by just one phrase, *þa idlan word*). McCord, however, thinks that *blandimentorum uerba* and *sermones dulces* have been rendered by the Old English *seo swetness þæs hæmedþinges*, while I would rather think that the latter literally translated the Latin *suauitas luxuriae*.¹⁷⁹

The *ubi sunt* passage in Blickling v attests to a unique double simile concluding the *ubi sunt* questions. This simile concerns a cloud and a stream of water. The former can be considered to be a commonplace image of biblical derivation, like the simile of the shadow.¹⁸⁰ Both are found, for example, in Wisdom II, 3–5: ‘et transiet uita nostra tamquam uestigium *nubis* et sicut *nebula* dissoluetur ... *umbrae* enim transitus est tempus nostrum’ [and our life will pass like the vestige of a *cloud*, and it will dissolve like *mist*, ... indeed our lifetime is the passing of a *shadow*].¹⁸¹ As to the image of the stream of water, it is clearly derived from the *Admonitio*. Irvine, who does not seem to be aware of McCord’s essay, has associated the simile in Blickling v with the more elaborate one concluding the *ubi sunt* passage in Vercelli x (lines 241–3):

Swa læne is sio oferlufu eorðan gestreona, emne hit bið
gelice rena scurum, þonne he of heofenum swiðost
dreoseð eft hraðe eal toglideð – bið fæger weder beorht
sunne.

[So transitory is that too great love of earthly treasures: it is even like the showers of rains; when it falls most heavily from the heavens and afterwards quickly all glides away, it is fair weather and bright sun.]

While in Blickling v the transience of worldly passions and pleasures is exemplified by the passing of a cloud and the flowing of a stream of water, in Vercelli x it is compared to the changeability of the weather, when heavy rain-showers are soon dispersed and followed by bright sun. Irvine’s conclusion that the final similes in Blickling v and Vercelli x ‘must derive from an original common image’¹⁸² appears to be misleading, therefore, not only because the two passages in question do not actually share any verbal parallels (and certainly rain-showers are different from streams of water, even in Anglo-Saxon England), but also because the two *ubi sunt* passages rely on two different ultimate Latin sources, namely the *Admonitio* and the *Synonyma* respectively.

The simile concluding the *ubi sunt* passage in Vercelli x, however, has no antecedent in the Isidorian source. A specific

Latin source for this simile might well be identified in the future, but I think that for the freshness and immediacy of its imagery we may just as well consider it as an original native insertion into a Latinate context. As I hope the present discussion is making clear, the Anglo-Saxons managed to create a vast *ubi sunt* repertoire precisely through the imaginative reworking and adaptation of Latin sources.¹⁸³ Such reworking was mainly homiletic and moralizing in nature, but the example of the final simile in Vercelli x as well as that in the *Sermo Augustini* show that the Latinate material could prompt a genuinely lyrical outpouring.

Having excluded a common derivation for the two similes concluding the *ubi sunt* passages in Blickling v and Vercelli x, a further possible interpretation could be suggested to associate them at least from a logical point of view. The images of the cloud and the stream of water in Blickling v, and the simile of the showers of rain in Vercelli x, could be interpreted in the light of the different states of water and of the origin of the rain.¹⁸⁴ Thus, while in Vercelli x water is presented in the state of rain, in the Blickling homily water is presented both as vapour and in its liquid state as a stream. Now, according to the cycle of water, the vapour making up clouds ultimately comes from the water of rivers, lakes, and oceans, and it will eventually turn into liquid water again in the form of rain. The cycle of water was extensively dealt with by Isidore himself in his *De natura rerum*,¹⁸⁵ and also by Anglo-Saxon authors such as Bede in his recasting of the Isidorian scientific treatise,¹⁸⁶ and by Ælfric in his representation of Bede.¹⁸⁷ A reference to the cycle of water and the origin of rain is also found in the *Old English Martyrology* in the entry of 20 March, which was considered to be the third day of creation.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, the cycle of water and the different states of this element proved a fertile source of inspiration within the Anglo-Saxon riddle-production. At least six of the Exeter Book riddles, that is items i, ii, iii,¹⁸⁹ xxxiii, lxxiv, and lxxxiii,¹⁹⁰ deal with the different states of water and its transformations, and the first three of them betray a knowledge of Isidore's *De natura rerum* as well as of Bede's treatise of the same name.¹⁹¹ The two similes concluding the *ubi sunt* passage in Blickling v and in Vercelli x might therefore be interpreted as a learned *uariatio* of the image of water, making a witty use of the different states of this element to exemplify the fleetingness and inconsistency of earthly life.

Finally, some analogies could be identified between the simile of the cloud in Blickling v and the simile of the smoke in two variant versions of Vercelli x, namely Napier xlix and Irvine vii.¹⁹² In both these variants, the simile of the showers of rain is preceded by a comparison with smoke, that is, the excessive love of earthly treasures is said to be *smeke ilic* in Irvine vii,¹⁹³ and *smice gelic* in one of the three witnesses collated for Napier xlix, namely CCCC 302, although the latter reading was rejected by the editor.¹⁹⁴

Vercelli iv is a homily of eschatological content,¹⁹⁵ which includes what has been described as ‘one of the most dramatic and successful of all addresses of the soul to the body in Old English literature.’¹⁹⁶ Indeed, in Vercelli iv the *ubi sunt* passage is not part of the homilist’s meditation on human frailty and transience, but rather is uttered by the sinful soul and defiantly directed at her body (lines 266–70):

Eala, ðu wyrma gecow 7 wulfes geslit 7 fugles geter, 7 þu
þe wære Godes andsaca swa lange swa ic on ðe wunode,
hwær is þin miht 7 þine strengo 7 þin anmedla 7 þin
mycle mod 7 þine renceo þin onwald 7 þine oferhigdo 7
þin blis, butan eall þis þe wearð to nahte siððan ic of ðe
ute wearð?

[Alas, you food of worms and rending of wolves and
tearing of birds, and you, who were God’s adversary, so
long as I dwelt in you, where is your might and your
strength and your pride and your great mind and your
ostentation and your authority and your haughtiness and
your joy, except all this has become to naught for you,
after I escaped from you?]¹⁹⁷

As mentioned above, no Latin source has so far been identified for this passage. It seems unnecessary to postulate a specific Latin antecedent for it, as the Anglo-Saxon compiler might just as well have been prompted by the context and he might easily have drawn on the extant vernacular stock of *ubi sunt* phrases. The soul-and-body legend naturally represented a narrative frame where both the moralizing and affecting potential of the *ubi sunt* topos could be put to a most effective use.¹⁹⁸ The *ubi sunt* passage in Vercelli iv could, therefore, provide a case for what has been

called the ‘mnemonic transmission’ of homiletic motifs,¹⁹⁹ insofar as the *ubi sunt* questions on the part of the soul might have been spontaneously drawn from the vast repertoire of devotional and eschatological motifs ‘inhabiting’ and making up the memory of Anglo-Saxon homilists.

The insistence of these *ubi sunt* questions on abstract nouns denoting power, pride, and a comfortable lifestyle can be associated with the *quid profuit* tradition, and the questions are introduced by the more common *hwær is* formula rather than the *hwær com* one. The main interest of this *ubi sunt* passage, however, lies in the context in which it occurs, namely the address of the soul to the body. As we have seen, in Vercelli x the conflation between the *ubi sunt* topos and the soul-and-body legend is only hinted at, while in the Macarius Homily and the *Sermo Augustini* the *ubi sunt* passage is introductory to the vision of the separation of the soul from the body and the subsequent address of the former to the latter. Now, in Vercelli iv the *ubi sunt* motif is part of the bitter accusations addressed by the soul to the sinful body, and, consequently, the rhetorical *ubi sunt* questions become highly personalized, as the repeated use of the personal pronoun *þu* and possessive adjective *þin* clearly shows. This emphasis on the individual naturally lends greater forcefulness and didactic effectiveness to the motif, the more so since the *ubi sunt* passage is immediately followed by the scathing statement of the soul that the dead body has now definitely lost the love of all his dear ones (lines 270–3).²⁰⁰

It is appropriate to conclude this survey of the Old English prose *ubi sunt* passages with a return to Vercelli xxii. Surprisingly, considering it is the Old English text most indebted to the *Synonyma*, this homily does not feature an *ubi sunt* passage. However, a brief paragraph (lines 123–8), which itself does not have an antecedent in the *Synonyma*, but which joins two sections of the homily indebted to the Isidorian source, contains an injunction to visit the tombs of dead men and to ponder on their fate. The passage in question occurs between a paragraph warning of the unpredictability of death and another exhorting the listener to keep a truly Christian conduct of life. The injunction to visit the tomb therefore perfectly suits the context, and indeed a series of *ubi sunt* questions would also have been appropriate:

Gehyrað, men þa leofestan, ða ðe her syndon on þyssum
folce dysige recelease. Gangað to deadra manna
bebyrigenesse geseoð þær lifigendra bysene. Io hie
wæron²⁰¹ us gelice on þysse worulde wynsumnesse
lifigende him welena stryndon him mycla æhta
hæbbende wæron. Ac ðas ealle synt fram him anumen.
By hine ne scele nan man swa sylfne beswican þæt he
him langes lifes wene.

[Listen, dearly beloved men, those who here are foolish
and reckless among this people. Go to the burial of dead
men and see there an example for the living. Once they
were like us living in the delight of this world and they
amassed riches for themselves and owned for themselves
great possessions. But these are all taken away from him.
Therefore no man must so deceive himself (to the effect)
that he expect a long life for himself.]²⁰²

Although the Old English does not feature any specific parallel
with Caesarius's *De elemosinis*, I think the general content of the
passage – with its admonition from the dead, its idea that the dead
used to be as we are now (echoing Caesarius's 'quod ego fui tu es'),
and the memory of the pleasures and material goods they enjoyed
in this life and which are now forever lost – definitely recalls
Caesarius's *sermo* as the ultimate source. In particular, I have
found that the Vercelli passage is in some points very close to the
wording of the version of the injunction contained in *Sermo ad
fratres* 58. I quote the Latin, highlighting in bold the parallels with
Vercelli xxii:

Audite itaque omnes **insipientes in populo**, et
negligentes aliquando cognoscite. **Ite ad sepulcra**
mortuorum, et **uidete exempla uiuentium**. Iacent ossa,
perit homo, et tamen causa eius reseruatur in die iudicii.
Fuit et ipse nobis similis aliquando homo **in uanitate**
uiuens, in saeculo studens **diuitiis**, multiplicauit agros,
plantaui uineas, implens horrea sua in apothecis multis,
et laetatus est in abundantia sua: et ecce subito **ablata**
sunt omnia ab oculis eius. Plaudebat sibi per schemata
multa, sericis uestibus indutus, pompas et luxurias sibi

adhibens, epularum diuitias excolens, saltationes et iocos in ebrietatibus exhibebat, prandia sua cum coena miscebat, et laetitiae suae uix dabat finem: et ecce **ablata sunt** omnia ab oculis eius.²⁰³

[Listen, then, all those among this folk who are foolish, and for once understand you (who are) careless. Go to the dead men's graves and behold the examples of the living. The bones lie there, the man is dead, and nevertheless his trial is kept on hold for Judgment Day. He once was like us, a man living in vanity, striving for this world's riches, he multiplied (his) lands, planted vineyards, filling up his granaries in many warehouses and he rejoiced in his opulence: but then all these things were suddenly taken away from his eyes. He was well contented with himself in many fashions, decked himself in silk clothing, enjoying pomp and luxury, cultivating a variety of banquets, in his drunkenness he performed jokes and dancings, mingled lunches with dinners and he hardly put an end to his feasting: but then all these things were taken away from his eyes.]

The Old English compiler has drastically summarized his source, so that the long catalogue of the dead man's properties and sensual pleasures has been synthesized into just three Old English phrases ('[wæron] on þysse worulde ... hæbbende wæron'). However, the opening exhortation to visit the tomb as well as the key phrase 'fuit ipse et nobis similis' have been translated literally. The specific nature of these parallels between the Old English homily and the pseudo-Augustinian sermon would exclude the possibility that this injunction to visit the tomb was spontaneously inserted by the Anglo-Saxon compiler as a homiletic commonplace. Therefore, either the compiler of Vercelli xxii must have drawn on a source other than the *Synonyma* for this injunction and skilfully inserted it between the two paragraphs based on the Isidorian source, or, more plausibly, the injunction to visit the tomb must already have been combined with the material from the *Synonyma* in the Latin exemplar of Vercelli xxii, and the Anglo-Saxon compiler faithfully followed it.²⁰⁴

Be that as it may, a point of great interest is the fact that within

a text so heavily indebted to the *Synonyma* as Vercelli xxii we find inserted a passage which can be associated with Caesarius's *De elemosinis*,²⁰⁵ namely the second major source of the *ubi sunt* topos in Anglo-Saxon England after the *Synonyma*. This seems to confirm what Cross had already noted with respect to the imaginative treatment and artful variation of the Latin sources in Old English *ubi sunt* passages. As has been pointed out, the compilers of these Old English homilies, as well as alternating the *hwær is* with the *hwær com* formula, often combined the *ubi sunt* questions focusing on people – as attested in the *Synonyma* and ultimately derived from Baruch III, 16–19 – with the *quid profuit* ones – as attested in Caesarius's *De elemosinis* and ultimately derived from Wisdom V, 8–9. Now, the insertion of a passage linked to the tradition of Caesarius's *De elemosinis* into a homiletic recasting of a vast portion of the *Synonyma* such as Vercelli xxii provides additional evidence that the Latin sources for the *ubi sunt* motif were not kept distinct or felt to be mutually exclusive, but were freely drawn on to create a vast vernacular stock of *ubi sunt* phrases.

The *ubi sunt* Motif in Old English Poetry

The *ubi sunt* topos also features in three Old English verse texts, namely *The Seafarer*, *The Wanderer*,²⁰⁶ and the Alfredian version of Metre vii of the second book of Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae*.²⁰⁷

The Seafarer and *The Wanderer* have often been considered companion pieces, because of their many affinities in subject matter, tone, style, and structure.²⁰⁸ In particular, as Shippey has pointed out, 'these two and only these two poems occupy as it were a "hinge" position between the long-accepted set of "elegies" and the more recently seen and larger category of "wisdom poems."' ²⁰⁹ In particular, *The Wanderer* has been defined as a 'non-proverbial wisdom poem' conveying 'an overwhelming sense of the transitory nature of existence.'²¹⁰ In this respect, it can be associated both thematically and structurally with Ecclesiastes, the 'only biblical book to relentlessly pursue this same theme.'²¹¹ Precisely this combination of elegiac and sapiential components can be said to represent the core of the medieval *ubi sunt* as the motif of transience and regret, which, as already pointed out, has

got its main sources in the Bible's sapiential and prophetic books, especially Wisdom and Baruch. As we shall see, the *ubi sunt* passages in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer* are perhaps the most revealing examples in Old English literature of the ambivalent nature of this topos and of its captivating conflation of *contemptus mundi* and nostalgia, moralizing injunction and regret, lyrical effusion and gnomic meditation about life in this world and in the next one.²¹² The *ubi sunt* passage in *The Seafarer* (lines 80b–85) has already been shown to derive from the *Synonyma*:

Dagas sind gewitene,
ealle onmedlan eorþan rices;
næron nu cyningas ne caseras
ne goldgiefan swylce iu wæron,
þonne hi mæst mid him mærþa gefremedon
ond on dryhtlicestum dome lifdon.

[The days have been slipping away, and all the pomp of the kingdom of earth. There are not now kings nor emperors nor gold-giving lords like those that once used to be, when they performed the greatest deeds among themselves and lived in the most noble renown.]²¹³

As Cross noted, this passage does not feature any proper *ubi sunt* rhetorical questions, but the reference to the kings and caesars immediately recalls the *Synonyma*'s questions 'Dic ubi sunt reges? ubi principes?,' and the opening phrase, 'dagas sind gewitene,' 'summarises and echoes the first sentence in [*Synonyma* II, 91].'²¹⁴ Interestingly, Cross associated the phrase 'swylce iu wæron' (line 83b), which has no antecedent in the *Synonyma*, with the phrase 'þe jo wæron,' which modifies the subject (*þa cyningas*) of an *ubi sunt* question in another *ubi sunt* passage derived from the *Synonyma*, namely that in Napier xlix (263. 15), a variant version of Vercelli x.²¹⁵ Indeed, fundamentally the same phrase also occurs in Vercelli x itself ('þe gio wæron,' line 234) and in another of its variant versions, namely Napier xxx ('þe geo gefyrn wæron,' 148. 28–9), as well as in yet another *ubi sunt* passage ultimately relying on the *Synonyma*, that is in the Macarius Homily ('þe geo wæron,' line 58).²¹⁶ In all these texts our phrase always expands the noun (*þa cyningas*) which is the subject of one of the *ubi sunt*

questions.²¹⁷ Moreover, a close equivalent of the Old English phrase occurs in the Latin tag introducing the *ubi sunt* passage in the *Sermo Augustini*, this time modifying the subject *imperatores* ('ubi [sunt] imperatores qui fuerant ante nos').²¹⁸ Finally, a similar rubric ('ubi sount qui ante nos fuerount') introduces the *ubi sunt* passage concluding a Middle English poem, the *Sayings of St Bernard*.²¹⁹

Cross suggested that the Old English phrase 'þe geo wæron,' regardless of its various formulations, must have translated a Latin phrase such as '(ubi sunt) qui ante nos fuerunt,' and he reached the conclusion that both the poet of *The Seafarer* and the compiler of Napier xlix must have drawn on 'the same tradition,' namely the same intermediary Latin sources between the *Synonyma* and the Old English texts.²²⁰ So far no intermediate source between the *Synonyma* and the compiler of Vercelli x has been identified, but in the case of both the Macarius Homily and the *Sermo Augustini* the closest antecedent of their *ubi sunt* passages has been traced to the two pseudepigraphal sermons, pseudo-Isidore, *Sermo* 3 and the *Sermo ad fratres* 68.²²¹ The occurrence in the Macarius Homily of the phrase 'þe jo wæron' and of a corresponding Latin phrase in the *Sermo Augustini*, therefore, seems to substantiate further Cross's conclusions that *The Seafarer*-poet and the later Old English homilists must have derived their *ubi sunt* passages from a common stock of Latin sources, notably a number of pseudepigraphical Latin sermons, which often mediated to the Anglo-Saxons knowledge of the relevant section of the *Synonyma*. Indeed, Gordon explicitly associated the contents of pseudo-Isidore, *Sermo* 3 and the *Sermo* 68 with *The Seafarer* too, speculating that probably another recension of these two sermons was known to the Old English poet. In particular, she suggested that the themes and ideas contained in these pseudepigraphical Latin sermons 'must at some stage have been assembled into a stylised pattern ... and it is possible that, at a later stage, poems like *The Seafarer* helped to crystallise the homiletic ideas still further into the form in which they appear in the Old English homilies.'²²² I do not wish to tackle the problematic issue of the chronological, thematic, and stylistic relationship between Old English poetry and homiletic literature.²²³ However, pertinent though Cross and Gordon's conclusions might be in terms of source studies, I would argue that the prevalent note in the *ubi sunt*

passage of *The Seafarer* is not so much homiletic or moralizing as elegiac. The world that these lines evoke is entirely secular, if not patently heroic, and the passing of its glorious figures and the fame of their noble deeds are inspired by and in their turn provoke heartfelt nostalgia.

It is nevertheless noteworthy that in making her case for a significant homiletic component in *The Seafarer*, Gordon pointed out that the description of old age, with its most unpleasant aspects of physical decay in lines 91–6 of the poem, echoes an analogous passage in Napier xxx (147. 26–148. 7).²²⁴ In fact the relevant passage from Napier xxx derives with little change from Vercelli homily ix (lines 90–7),²²⁵ a close analogue of which has in turn been identified in the *Catechesis celtica*,²²⁶ ‘an extensive collection of homiletic and exegetical extracts’ mostly of Hiberno-Latin origin.²²⁷ (Incidentally, the *Catechesis* indirectly borrows a sentence from *Synonyma* II, 98 via the *Collectio canonum hibernensis*.)²²⁸ One of the distinctive traits of this collection is ‘the fondness for litanic modes of expression and enumeration.’²²⁹ In particular, the relevant description of the ills of old age is part of the motif of the ‘five likenesses of hell,’²³⁰ a numerical theme common in both Hiberno-Latin and Irish vernacular sources,²³¹ occurring, among other texts, also in the *Collectanea pseudo-Beda* and *De XII abusivis saeculi*.²³² In Old English, the ‘five likenesses’ motif is fully preserved in the relevant passage of Vercelli ix and in its variant version in Napier xxx, while it is hinted at in Bazire and Cross v,²³³ and the relevant lines of *The Seafarer* can well be considered to be a further elaboration of this motif in Old English literature. What is more intriguing is the fact that a motif which has been demonstrated to be of Irish origin occurs alongside an *ubi sunt* passage ultimately derived from the *Synonyma*. As has been argued with regard to the transmission of the *Synonyma* to the British Isles, the Irish arguably played a pivotal role,²³⁴ and the synonymical style, with its patterned iteration of words and phrases, and with its litanic runs of parallel or antithetical commata, seems to have been particularly congenial to Irish rhetorical taste, with its penchant for the ‘enumerative style’²³⁵ as well as for the strings of synonyms of the Hisperic Latin.²³⁶

Homiletic analogues have also been identified for at least three passages of *The Wanderer*, namely a gnomic list of qualities

defining the wise man (lines 64–72), a *sum-* sequence (lines 80b–4),²³⁷ and an *ubi sunt* passage (lines 92–6).²³⁸ I will here focus on the latter and quote it in full:

Hwær cwom mearg? Hwær cwom mago? Hwær cwom
maþþumgyfa?
Hwær cwom symbla gesetu? Hwær sindon seledreamas?
Eala beorht bune! Eala byrnwiga!
Eala þeodnes þrym! Hu seo þrag gewat,
genap under nihthelm, swa heo no wære!

[What has become of the steed? What has become of the
young man? What has become of the treasure-giver?
What has become of the feast-buildings? Where are the
joys of the hall? Ah, for the bright cup! Ah, for the mail-
coated warrior! Ah, for the prince's power! How that
time has passed, grown dark under the shadow of night,
as though it had never been!]²³⁹

No source has so far been identified for this passage. In his study on the *ubi sunt* topos, however, Cross concluded that 'it is ... reasonable to assume that [*The Wanderer*-poet] also knew the same kind of [Latin patristic material]' as that on which the Anglo-Saxon homilists as well as *The Seafarer*-poet drew, and that he then freely adapted and varied this popular stock in accordance with poetic diction and alliterative measure.²⁴⁰ Orchard has recently defined *The Wanderer* as a 'heroic homily,'²⁴¹ pointing out that 'if [*The Wanderer*-poet] wished to nod in the direction of contemporary Christian homiletic tradition, [he] none the less sought to ground the poem firmly in the phrasing and traditional technique of a secular past, the passing of which is marked with such reverence.'²⁴² Indeed, like the corresponding lines of *The Seafarer*, here too the prevalent mood seems to be regret. With their focus on both characters and symbols of heroic life, the *ubi sunt* questions, 'far from suggesting that their subjects are worthless[,] [confer] a deep nostalgic value upon them, and the very fleetingness which the questions call to mind enhances rather than diminishes their preciousness.'²⁴³

As can be seen, the *ubi sunt* passage in *The Wanderer* includes both the *hwær com* and *hwær syndon* formulas not unlike homilies

such as Blickling viii and Vercelli x,²⁴⁴ and it has already been pointed out that the *hwær com* formula can be considered as a variant of the more common *hwær syndon* formula.²⁴⁵ In particular, the *ubi sunt* passage in *The Wanderer* has been associated by Orchard with the corresponding passage in Vercelli x. Indeed, the Old English poem shares with the Vercelli homily at least three themes, all occurring in the same order within the two texts, namely the above-mentioned gnomic list of qualities of the wise man,²⁴⁶ the *ubi sunt* motif,²⁴⁷ and a closing passage which shows ‘[striking] parallels of basic structure and phraseology.’²⁴⁸

Likewise, Orchard has pointed out specific parallels and echoes in theme, style, structure, and diction linking *The Wanderer* to no fewer than three other Old English poems alongside *The Seafarer*, namely *The Dream of the Rood*,²⁴⁹ *Deor*, and *Homiletic Fragment II*,²⁵⁰ the latter two also occurring in the Exeter Book together with *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer* themselves.²⁵¹ Beyond their specific inspiration and purpose, these poems are clearly permeated by Christian sentiments and values, and can be best appreciated within a Christian frame of reference. In particular, *The Dream of the Rood* and *Homiletic Fragment II* can rightly be considered homiletic poems or even ‘versified homilies.’²⁵² In the case of *Deor*, the parallels with *The Wanderer* are all the more intriguing because both poems have been associated with Boethius’s *De consolazione philosophiae*.²⁵³ Indeed, Cross has defined *The Wanderer* as ‘a Boethian consolation,’²⁵⁴ and Horgan has pointed out that *The Wanderer* is ‘centrally concerned with the problem of the relation of Fate to Providence’ as outlined in Book IV, Prose vi of *De consolazione philosophiae*.²⁵⁵ More recently, North has interpreted *The Wanderer* as a riddle within which the poet concealed ‘the essence of the *De consolazione [philosophiae]*.’²⁵⁶ According to this reading of the poem, the Wanderer himself – in his two *personae*, namely the *anhaga* (line 1), the solitary exile of the beginning of the poem, and the *snottor on mode* (line 111), the wise man of the final lines – would be Boethius himself.²⁵⁷ In North’s view, this poetic representation of the philosopher by the Anglo-Saxon poet is highly syncretistic since it synthesizes Ulysses, the wanderer *par excellence*, and a genuinely Germanic archetypal hero, known in Scandinavian analogues as Starkaðr Stórvíksson, whose vicissitudes are here interpreted in a Christian perspective.²⁵⁸ Be that as it may, what is

more important to emphasize in this discussion is the link established between *The Wanderer* and a text such as Boethius's *De consolacione philosophiae*, which was composed nearly a century before the *Synonyma* and, together with them, can be considered to have been the standard *Trostbuch* in medieval England.²⁵⁹ The wide circulation of both texts and their vernacular adaptations – most notably, as far as Boethius's *De consolacione philosophiae* is concerned, those by King Alfred and eventually by Chaucer – do indeed encourage such a conclusion. It might also be noteworthy that *De consolacione philosophiae* has been considered to be a sequel of Augustine's *Soliloquia*, a text with which the *Synonyma* have often been associated,²⁶⁰ and which King Alfred considered among those books most necessary to know alongside Boethius's text. Indeed, it could be said that the *Soliloquia*, *De consolacione philosophiae*, and the *Synonyma* make up a key triad of philosophical and sapiential texts which proved a rich source of inspiration for learned Anglo-Saxons.

Interestingly, Leslie has suggested that the Christian and Boethian sapiential component of the *ubi sunt* passage in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer* could also have been mediated by the gnomic traditions which concerned the duties and prerogatives of kings and were the subject of a popular genre in Ireland, namely that of *tecosca* [counsels], the equivalent of the Latin *speculum principis*.²⁶¹ One of the main representatives of this genre is the pseudepigraphical treatise *De XII abusiuis saeculi*,²⁶² in particular its 'ninth abuse' on the *rex iniquus*, which 'contributed significantly to the ideology of Christian kingship [both] on the continent [and in Anglo-Saxon England]'.²⁶³ An expanded version of the 'ninth abuse' makes up one of the homilies of the Irish collection of the *Leabhar Breac*,²⁶⁴ the so-called *Sermo ad reges*,²⁶⁵ a bilingual Latin and Irish text which includes an *ubi sunt* passage also derived from the *Synonyma* and very similar to that of *The Seafarer*.²⁶⁶ Likewise, another of these collections of instructions, the *Tecosca Cormaic* or *Instructions of King Cormac Mac Airt*,²⁶⁷ contains a list of qualities of the wise man which is 'strikingly similar in style and content' to a corresponding passage in *The Wanderer* (lines 66–8).²⁶⁸ Moreover, Leslie has pointed out that the whole group of Old English elegies in general show a fondness for certain motifs that occur frequently in Celtic poetry, such as the ruined hall or court, the pathetic fallacy, and the interweaving of gnomic utterances

with personal reflections, all of which are found in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*.²⁶⁹

In sum, in Leslie's words, *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*, and especially the latter poem, '[appear] to contain a blend of traditional Germanic themes and images and themes derived from Boethius and the Christian Latin literature emanating from Irish writers, or writers influenced by the traditions, techniques and interests of Irish Christianity.'²⁷⁰ That being said, it cannot be demonstrated that *The Seafarer*- and *The Wanderer*-poets knew and drew upon these putative Irish sources.²⁷¹ Texts such as the *Sermo ad reges* and the *Tecosca Cormaic* seem to be later than the two Old English poems, especially the former, since the collection of the *Leabhar Breac* has been dated to the mid-eleventh century, while the *Tecosca Cormaic* have been dated to the early ninth century. Also, as Leslie himself admits, it remains an open question whether such thematic and stylistic features were really derived from Insular Celtic models rather than from romanized continental Celtic writers, especially Gaulish ones such as Venantius Fortunatus.²⁷² However, the path of adaptation suggested by Leslie from the Isidorian source to the Old English poems via some Hiberno-Latin and Old Irish texts is undoubtedly intriguing in view of the role that the Irish seem to have played in the manuscript transmission of the *Synonyma* as well as in the appreciation of their style.²⁷³

Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae* itself features an *ubi sunt* pas-sage, which is included in Metre vii of Book II. This metre deals with the fugacity and changeability of worldly glory, which – however great and widespread – is inexorably subject to the annihilating and levelling action of death. The relevant passage reads:

Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent,
Quid Brutus aut rigidus Cato?²⁷⁴

[Where do the bones of trustworthy Fabricius rest now,
what about Brutus or the stern Cato?]

As can be seen, this *ubi sunt* passage is very brief, making up just a distich, but it represents the crucial midpoint of the whole metre,

where the introductory meditation on the vanity of man's efforts to gain fame culminates (lines 1–14), and from where the inevitable conclusion follows that what is left of all worldly glory after death is just 'pauculis inane nomen litteris' [a vain name of a few letters, (line 18)]. Soon enough the tenuous renown that has outlived a man will elapse, and then that man will experience a second, even more ruthless death. The subjects of the *ubi sunt* questions are all figures of classical antiquity, although the identity of the two most famous names cited, Brutus and Cato, is not universally agreed upon, as the former could be either Lucius Iunius Brutus, the first Roman consul together with Collatinus, or Marcus Iunius Brutus, the slayer of Caesar, and the latter could be either Cato the Censor or Cato of Utica. As to 'the loyal Fabricius,' he has been identified with Gaius Fabricius Luscinius, the conqueror of Pyrrhus and a model of the rigour and honesty of ancient Rome.

Fabricius has been the subject of what we may call an exemplary case of 'domesticating translation,'²⁷⁵ since in both the Alfredian prose and verse versions of Boethius's work,²⁷⁶ this hero of classical Rome gives way to the archetypal Germanic smith, Weland, while the reference to Brutus and Cato is maintained. (The prose version also mentions Brutus's co-conspirator, Gaius Cassius Longinus.)²⁷⁷ Both the Old English prose and verse versions, however, have greatly expanded the Boethian metre, and especially the verse one has originally reinterpreted it in an explicitly Christian perspective (lines 33–54):²⁷⁸

Hwær sint nu þæs wisan Welandes ban,
 þæs goldsmiðes, þe wæs geo mærost?
 Forþy ic cwæð þæs wisan Welandes ban,
 forðy ængum ne mæg eorðbuendra
 se cræft losian þe him Crist onlænð.
 Ne mæg mon æfre þy eð ænne wræccan
 his cræftes beniman, þe mon oncerran mæg
 sunnan onswifan, and ðisne swiftan rodor
 of his rihtryne rinca ænig.
 Hwa wat nu þæs wisan Welandes ban,
 on hwelcum hi hlæwa hrusan þeccen?
 Hwær is nu se rica Romana wita,
 and se aroda, þe we ymb sprecað,
 hiora heretoga, se gehaten wæs

mid þæm burgwarum Brutus nemned?
Hwær is eac se wisa and se weorðgeorna
and se fæstræda folces hyrde,
se wæs uðwita ælces ðinges,
cene and cræftig, ðæm wæs Caton nama?
Hi wæron gefyrn forðgewitene;
nat nænig mon hwær hi nu sindon.
Hwæt is hiora here buton se hlisa an?

[Where are now the bones of the wise Weland, the goldsmith who once was most famous? I spoke of the bones of the wise Weland because the talent that Christ grants to any earthdweller cannot fail him. No one can ever punish a man, deprive (him) of his skill more easily than one can turn away the sun and no man can push off this swift sky from its right course. Who knows now the bones of the wise Weland, in which burrow they are covered up with earth? Where is now the noble Roman sage, and the bold one of their generals, of whom we speak, he [who] was called Brutus among the citizens? And where is the wise and the high-souled and the firm guardian of the people, he [who] was knowledgeable of everything, clever and cunning, whose name was Cato? They passed away long ago; nobody knows where they are now. What is their glory but just a sound?]

The Old English metre appears to be a highly syncretistic composition, where Weland, the representative of a mythological Germanic past, is mentioned three times (lines 33, 35, and 42) alongside two figures of classical antiquity, as well as the Ruler of heavens (*rodora waldend*, line 30) and Christ (line 37), while the Lord, *dryhten*, is again explicitly referred to in the close (line 67). Despite the pagan figures named and in contrast to the Latin source, the general outlook of the Old English metre is definitely Christian. In this regard, the latter text seems to resolve the ‘inherent ambiguity’ of many sections of *The Wanderer*, with their blurring distinctions between secular and Christian values and diction,²⁷⁹ and thus the metre resembles the more frankly religious *Seafarer*, with its continuous presence of God and its constant preoccupation with the after-death destiny.²⁸⁰ In both

The Wanderer and the Boethian Metre, however, the reminiscence of a secular and heroic past is in the end superseded by the anticipation of a Christian homiletic future, as suggested by the disquieting question concluding the metre (lines 68–70):

Hwæt þonne hæbbe hæleþa ænig,
guma æt þæm gilpe, gif hine gegripan mot
se eca deað æfter þissum worulde?

What then would any man have, a glorious hero, if
eternal death can get hold of him after this world?

Finally, a disputed occurrence of the *ubi sunt* motif in Old English poetry is the so-called ‘Lay of the Last Survivor’ in *Beowulf* (lines 2247–66), uttered by the unnamed sole surviving member of a band of warriors who had once owned the dragon’s treasure-hoard and who died long ago. As Orchard has noted, the lay represents the perfect introduction to the dragon episode, mourning the loss of the noble race to which the speaker belonged and setting the bleak tone of the final part of the poem.²⁸¹ Although there is general agreement on the elegiac nature of the lay,²⁸² its ascription to the *ubi sunt* tradition is doubtful. Recently Wallerstein has rejected the possibility of interpreting the lay in the light of the *ubi sunt* topos, since it lacks both the stylistic and thematic prerequisites of the topos itself, that is, the rhetorical *ubi sunt* questions, on the one hand, and a religious consolation, on the other.²⁸³ The lack of both these preconditions is interconnected, insofar as the *ubi sunt* rhetorical questions are all about a ‘where?’ which for the faithful is the eternal life with God.²⁸⁴ In this respect the ‘lack of the rhetorical question “where?” can be seen as emblematic of the Last Survivor’s spiritual condition [of] irredeemable paganism.’²⁸⁵ However, precisely because the Last Survivor is, in Wallerstein’s words, a ‘wholly pagan and completely pre-Christian’ figure,²⁸⁶ it would be incongruous to look in his lay for that consolation in a Christian heaven that admittedly permeates the medieval *ubi sunt*. In other words, the lay of the Last Survivor could rather be interpreted in the light of a pagan, pre-Christian *ubi sunt*, although the absence of the very *ubi sunt* questions certainly makes problematic the inclusion of this passage of *Beowulf* in a catalogue of the formulations of the *ubi sunt* motif

in Old English.

A more pertinent approach seems that proposed by Garde, who has connected the Lay to the *ubi sunt* tradition because of the Survivor's didactic meditation on transience and the fate common to all men.²⁸⁷ The sapiential component of the *ubi sunt* is also a crucial element of *Beowulf*. As well as being in touch 'with a profoundly native elegiac pattern,'²⁸⁸ *Beowulf* features 'prominent themes of wisdom and/or prudence in conjunction with transience and the fragility of fame.'²⁸⁹ Indeed, the very fight against Grendel and his ultimate destruction evokes the biblical prophecy of Baruch III, 9–38, 'a notable source of the wisdom/*ubi sunt* tradition,' as we have seen.²⁹⁰ Interestingly, Garde connects *Beowulf* to *The Wanderer*, claiming that the latter poem helps to clarify aspects of the 'Christian extension of the wisdom/*ubi sunt* tradition' which is crucial to *Beowulf* too.²⁹¹ The spiritual progression in the two poems, from the recollection of a heroic past to the search for the grace of the Father in heaven, is 'identical'; the Sole Survivor does not share such a development, because unlike *Beowulf* and the *Wanderer*, he is a heathen and therefore experiences solely the tragic consequences of war and the human fate of death.²⁹²

This survey of the Old English *ubi sunt* passages has been intended to clarify further what Cross had already argued concerning the tendency towards expansion and variation typical of the *ubi sunt* topos in Old English literature. As we have seen, elements ultimately derived from both the Holy Writ and the two main patristic sources identified so far, namely Isidore's *Synonyma* and Caesarius's *De elemosinis*, were creatively combined. Such a conflation was also achieved through the mediation of pseudepigraphical Latin sermons as well as *florilegia* culled from patristic writings which granted the Anglo-Saxon authors the freedom to adapt and assemble for themselves matter from many sources.²⁹³ The ingenuity and ease with which the Anglo-Saxon writers adopted and adapted these Latin sources, often irrespective of a rigorous distinction between them, also enabled them to exploit the potential of the *ubi sunt* topos to the full. In this respect, it can be said that, although the contexts in which the *ubi sunt* topos occurs in Old English are eminently homiletic and moralizing, the Anglo-Saxon authors were often able to develop

and interpret the topos in a highly evocative, lyrical way, not only within poems such as *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer* but also within homilies such as Vercelli x and the *Sermo Augustini*.

CHAPTER SIX

The *Synonyma* in Anglo-Latin Literature

The two preceding chapters have dealt with the vernacularization of the *Synonyma*, that is, with the uses and adaptations that were made of the Isidorian text in Old English. There is evidence, however, that the *Synonyma* were also adopted and adapted within Anglo-Latin texts, and the present chapter will specifically discuss the influence of the Isidorian work on Anglo-Latin literary production. In particular, a number of *ubi sunt* passages will be analysed as well as private prayers excerpted from the *Synonyma*. Finally, pedagogical aspects of our text will be investigated by focusing on the role of the *Synonyma* as a source of one of the major didactic texts in pre-Conquest England, the *Colloquia* by Ælfric Bata.

The *ubi sunt* Motif in Anglo-Latin

The earliest attestation of the *ubi sunt* topos in Anglo-Latin is contained in the conclusion of Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Acircium*.¹ This passage was not considered by Cross and has been brought to scholarly attention by Orchard, who has emphasized its rich alliterative texture.² I quote the passage in question, reproducing Orchard's division of it into three sections according to different alliterating sounds and his highlighting of the relevant sound effects:

Quae est enim labentis mundi prosperitas aut
fallentis uitae felicitas? Nonne simillima collatione ut
somnia euanescit, ut fumus fatescit, ut spuma
marcescit? *Diuitiae, inquit psalmigrafus, si adfuerint,*
nolite cor apponere!

Utinam nobis praesentium rerum possessio non sit
futarum remuneratio! Utinam caducarum copia

secularum non sit inopia! Utinam lenocinantis mundi
oblectamenta aeternae beatitudinis non gignant
detrimenta!

**Quin potius transacto fragilis uitae interuallo
succedant suffragante Christo perpetua praemia
meritorum! Quod ipse praestare dignetur, qui pro
nobis in patibulo pependit, cum aeterno patre uiuens
ac regnans una cum spiritu sancto per infinita semper
saecula saeculorum! AMEN.**

[For what is the prosperity of the transitory world, or the happiness of a failing life? Does it not, by a most apt comparison, vanish like a dream, disperse like smoke, fade like foam? ‘Do not,’ says the psalmist, ‘set your heart on riches, if they are to be had.’ Would that the possession of present goods were not recompense for those of the future! Would that a wealth of transitory possessions does not prove a dearth of those to come! Would that the blandishments of the fading world do not produce risks to eternal blessedness! Much rather, when the brief span of fragile life is passed, should, with Christ’s help, the perpetual prizes of just deserts appear! And may He himself deign to grant this, He who hung for us on the Cross, who lives and reigns with the eternal Father, together with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever, age upon age, amen.]³

Aldhelm’s passage clearly displays a flamboyant use of rhetorical devices, such as rhyme, patterned syntax, and, above all, alliteration, all typical of the vernacular literary style. In particular, it has been pointed out that this passage betrays an influence by the vernacular poetic practice as well as by Irish models, ‘perhaps introduced through the medium of Hiberno-Latin hymns.’⁴

In view of these ‘extraordinary alliterative pyrotechnics,’⁵ any attempt to identify a specific source seems likely to fail. It might be worth pointing out, however, that the first section features at least three verbatim parallels with the *ubi sunt* passage of the

Synonyma, namely *mundi*, *felicitas*, and the phrase *somnium euanescit*. In general, it could be said that the first sentence in Aldhelm's text echoes the sentence of *Synonyma* II, 91 introducing the *ubi sunt* questions ('Breuis est huius mundi felicitas, ... temporalis potentia'), while the second sentence can be said to recall the two similes concluding the *ubi sunt* questions of the *Synonyma* ('quasi umbra transierunt, uelut somnium euanuerunt').⁶ It has already been noted that Aldhelm knew the *Synonyma* and is indeed the earliest witness to their knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England;⁷ it is therefore very likely that he drew on the Isidorian text for his *ubi sunt* passage. However, if this is the case, Aldhelm recast the rhetorical framework of his source so radically that one cannot be too certain of a direct, conscious borrowing from the *Synonyma* on his part. Aldhelm's passage, then, further attests to the ingenious and artful variation of the *ubi sunt* topos by the Anglo-Saxon writers as well as to their independence from a slavish reliance on their ultimate Latin sources.

Comparison with an analogous passage from Boniface's *Epistola* 9,⁸ clearly indebted to Aldhelm, can well help to clarify the relationship of both *ubi sunt* sections with their ultimate source. I quote the relevant extract from the Bonifatian epistle (5. 5–13), highlighting in bold the parallels with the Aldhelmian passage:

Et uniuersa mundi huius pretiosa siue in specimine auri et argenti siue in stellantium uarietate gemmarum uel in luxuosiorum ciborum aut comptorum uestimentorum adquisita diuersitate **simillima collatione** rerum ut umbra pretereunt, **ut fumus fatiscunt, ut spuma marcescunt** iuxta ueridicam psamigraphi sententiam dicentis: 'Homo sicut foenum dies eius, et sicut flos agri ita floriet' (Ps. CII, 15); et alibi: 'Dies mei sicut umbra declinauerunt, et ego sicut foenum arui' (Ps. CI, 12).⁹

[And all the precious things of this world, whether in the shape of gold and silver or in a variety of glittering gems or in an amassed assortment of immoderate food or elegant clothes, by a most apt comparison of things disappear like a shadow, vanish like smoke, waste away

like foam, according to the truthful judgement of the psalmist who says: 'O man, his days (are) like grass and he will blossom like the flower of the grass' (Psalm CII, 15), and elsewhere: 'My days have declined like a shadow and I have withered like grass' (Psalm CI, 12).]

This epistle is one of the earliest of that vast collection of texts that is generally labelled 'Bonifatian correspondence,'¹⁰ being dated 715 × 717, and is one of Boniface's letters where Aldhelm's influence is more pervasive.¹¹ Indeed, in the passage under consideration we can identify at least three verbatim parallels with the Aldhelmian *ubi sunt* lines quoted above. At the same time, however, Boniface has independently adapted and interpreted his Aldhelmian antecedent, for example, by doing without the rhetorical questions and expanding the two Aldhelmian noun phrases *mundi prosperitas* and *uitae felicitas* into a catalogue of precious items and worldly comforts which, as has already been pointed out, recalls quite closely the analogous list of the *Sermo Augustini*.¹² Like Aldhelm, Boniface concludes with a citation from the Psalms, but makes a different choice from his model by picking two quotations from Psalms CII, 15 and CI, 12, both focusing on the image of the grass and flowers withering away as a metaphor of fleeting humanity.¹³

As to the simile exemplifying the volatile state of man, it can be noted that in both texts it consists of three phrases each depicting a different image: Aldhelm has 'ut somnium euanescit, ut fumus fatescit, ut spuma marcescit,' while Boniface has 'ut umbra pretereunt, ut fumus fatiscunt, ut spuma marcescunt.' The latter two phrases practically correspond verbatim and clearly show Boniface's debt to Aldhelm. The first of the three phrases, however, is even more significant in that it suggests that, although clearly drawing on Aldhelm, Boniface too was familiar with what presumably was Aldhelm's ultimate antecedent, the *Synonyma*, in particular the two phrases 'uelut somnium euanuerunt, quasi umbra transierunt' (*Synonyma* II, 91). If Aldhelm is the first witness to the circulation of the Isidorian text in Anglo-Saxon England, Boniface's knowledge of it is equally certain.¹⁴ Now, in the adaptation of the two Isidorian phrases, it looks as though Aldhelm selected the former, while Boniface picked just the subject of the latter phrase (*umbra*). Boniface's sentence, then,

provides a typical example of what Orchard has defined ‘the creative tension between written, remembered and recycled words that is the hallmark of Anglo-Saxon literary culture [and that] is fully in evidence throughout the Bonifatian correspondence.’¹⁵ Indeed, in the light of my survey of the *ubi sunt* topos in Anglo-Saxon England, it can be said that the treatment of this motif on the part of Anglo-Saxon authors is a particularly fertile quarry of examples of such a ‘creative tension’ too.

The ‘derivative, repetitious and innately formulaic nature of the surviving Bonifatian correspondence’¹⁶ is also evident in another *ubi sunt* passage contained in Boniface’s *Epistola* 73,¹⁷ addressed to King Æthelbald of Mercia and dated 746–7, thereby following *Epistola* 9 by around thirty years. The relevant section reads (154. 1–21):

‘Quid nobis profuit superbia, aut quid diuitiarum iactatio contulit nobis? Transierunt omnia illa tamquam umbra et tamquam nuntius precurrens et tamquam nauis, quae pertransit, cuius non est uestigium inuenire, aut tamquam auis transuolans in aere’ (Sap. V, 8–11). Et post pauca: ‘Sic et nos nati continuo desiuiimus esse; in malignitate nostra consumpti sumus. Talia dixerunt in inferno hi, qui peccauerunt, quoniam spes impii tamquam lanugo est, quae a uento tollitur, et tamquam **spuma** gracilis, quae a procella dispergitur, et tamquam **fumus**, qui a uento diffusus est, et tamquam memoria hospitis unius diei praetereuntis’ (Sap. V, 13–15). Et alias: ‘Numerus dierum uitae hominis, si multum, centum anni, quasi paruula gutta de magno mari deputatus est’ (Eccli. XVIII, 8). Haec enim omnia secundum auctoritatem sanctae scripturae **rerum conlatione simillima** sunt. Sic et Iacobus frater Domini et apostolus de impio diuite disputans dixit: ‘**Sicut flos foeni transibit**; exortus est enim sol cum ardore et arefecit foenum; et flos eius decidit, et decor uultus eius deperiit, ita et diues in itineribus suis **marcescit**’ (Iac. I, 10–11). Et ipsa ueritas in euangelio proponens dixit: ‘Quid enim proderit homini, si lucretur uniuersum mundum, animae uero suae detrimentum patiatur’ (Matt. XVI, 26).

[‘What has pride profited us or what advantage has the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runs on, and as a ship that passes through the waves and the trace of which cannot be found, or as when a bird flies through the air’ (Wisdom V, 8–11). And a little further on: ‘So we also being born, immediately ceased to be; we are consumed in our wickedness. Such things the sinners said in hell; for the hope of the wicked is as dust which is blown away with the wind; and as a thin foam, which is dispersed by the storm, and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind; and as the remembrance of the guest of one day that passes by’ (Wisdom V, 13–15). And elsewhere: ‘The number of the days of men at the most are a hundred years. As a drop of water of the sea are they esteemed’ (Ecclesiasticus XVIII, 8). For all these (images) are by the authority of Holy Scripture by a most apt comparison of things. Thus also James, the brother of our Lord and an Apostle, discussing the impious rich man, has said: ‘As the flower of the grass shall he pass away. For the sun rose with a burning heat and parched the grass; and its flower fell off, and the beauty of its shape perished. So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.’ (James I, 10–11). And the Truth itself has set forth and said in the gospel: ‘For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?’ (Matthew XVI, 26)]¹⁸

As can be seen, unlike the *ubi sunt* passage in *Epistola* 9, where the biblical and patristic sources have been artfully reworked, the *ubi sunt* paragraph of *Epistola* 73 is a tour de force of biblical citations which are explicitly signalled as such. These citations can be grouped into two series, the former from the Old Testament, the latter from the New Testament, and the two groups are linked by a connecting sentence (‘Haec enim ... simil-lima sunt’). Such biblical quotations betray definite echoes of the former epistle, such as the image of the smoke (*fumus*), of the foam (*spuma*), and of earthly things decaying (*marcescit*). In this respect, the citations in *Epistola* 73 offer significant hints to identify the possible ultimate biblical sources for the *ubi sunt* passage in *Epistola* 9 and, in turn, in

Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Acircium*, where the two nouns *fumus* and *spuma*, as well as the verb *marcescere*, also occur. In particular, the simile of the smoke from Wisdom V, 15, is intriguing, since such a simile also occurs in another three *ubi sunt* passages derived from the *Synonyma*, two in the Old English homilies Napier xlix and Irvine vii,¹⁹ and the third in a Latin *ubi sunt* piece contained in CCCC 190.²⁰ With regard to the latter *ubi sunt* passage, Cross suggested that *fumus* could well have been either a misreading for *som*, that is the abbreviated form of *somnium*, which is the subject of one of the two similes in the *Synonyma* ('uelut somnium euanuerunt'), or else an original choice on the part of the compiler of the CCCC 190 piece.²¹ The quotation from Wisdom V, 15 in Boniface's *Epistola* 73 provides a further possible explanation, namely that the *fumus*-simile as well as the *spuma*-simile in both Boniface's *Epistola* 9 and in Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Acircium* were biblical echoes spontaneously triggered by and conflated with their ultimate patristic source, the *Synonyma*. Strictly speaking, the similes in Wisdom V, 15 refer to the *spes impii*, but since they occur in one of the most influential biblical sources for the medieval *ubi sunt*,²² they likely became exemplary images of worldly transience in general; as such they came to be spontaneously associated with the *ubi sunt* theme and added to the stock of related similes.

Furthermore, another simile, that centred on the image of the *flos foeni* [flower of the grass], recurs in both Bonifatian epistles and provides still more evidence for the derivative and echoic character of the Bonifatian correspondence. While in the earlier *Epistola* 9 the *foenum*-simile occurs in two explicit quotations from the Psalms,²³ in the later one the same image is proposed by way of a New Testament source, a citation from the First Epistle of the apostle James, which, however, seems to draw and elaborate on the Psalm text.²⁴ Finally, the reshaping and recycling of the same words and themes is also evident in the brief sentence linking the first sequence of biblical quotations from the Old Testament with the second series from the New Testament. In this connecting sentence, the images derived from the Holy Writ are said to be *rerum conlatione simillima* [by a most apt comparison of things]. The same phrase also occurs both in Boniface's *Epistola* 9 and, without *rerum*, in Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Acircium*, where it introduces the *fumus*- and *spuma*-similes.²⁵

Echoes of the *ubi sunt* passage of the *Synonyma* are found in one of Alcuin's epistles, although the letter in question does not feature the usual rhetorical questions.²⁶ The relevant lines are quoted with the parallels with the *Synonyma* highlighted in bold (49. 31–50. 1):

nec haec **felicitas huius saeculi** uobis aeterna esse
poterit ... omnia **huius saeculi** delectamenta **uelut**
uolatilis fugit [sic] **umbra**[.]

[nor could this happiness of this world have been eternal
for you ... all the entertainments of this world flee like a
volatile shadow].²⁷

This letter was written in 793 in the wake of the shocking sack of Lindisfarne by the Vikings and is addressed to Æthelred, king of Northumbria, and to three of his thanes, to warn them about the transitory and corrupting nature of earthly riches as well as to remind them of the duties of just kings. The sombre admonition quoted above, then, fittingly encapsulates Alcuin's inspiration and his urge to recall the Northumbrian Christians, especially their leaders, to a genuine *timor domini* after such a dramatic event. The echoes of the Isidorian *ubi sunt* passage in Alcuin's epistle are further substantiated by his direct knowledge and appreciation of the *Synonyma*. Alcuin held Isidore in high esteem,²⁸ and drew on the *Synonyma* in his *De uirtutibus et uitiiis*, a patristic *florilegium* of ethical content confected as a *speculum principis*.²⁹ As has been shown, rather than relying on the 'ready-made' selection in Defensor's *Liber scintillarum*,³⁰ Alcuin made direct use of Isidore's *Sententiae* and *Synonyma*, as well as of other patristic sources.³¹

Alcuin's epistolary features at least three *ubi sunt* passages proper, although the influence of the *Synonyma* is hardly detectable in them. One of these passages contains the simile of the smoke.³² Feeling that the end of his life is drawing near and overwhelmed by the memory of all his sins, Alcuin begs his addressee, Paulinus of Aquileia, to pray for him. The *ubi sunt* motif fittingly opens such a melancholic meditation on man's fleeting life (130. 19–21):

Ubi tunc inlecebrae carnalium delectationum? ubi
saecularis pompe superba ambitio? Nonne omnia haec

ueluti fumus, uentosis procellarum in aerem dispersus
gurgitibus, euanescunt?

[Where (are) then the temptations of carnal pleasures?
Where (is) the arrogant ambition of secular pomp? Do
not all these things vanish like smoke (when it is)
dispersed in the air by the whirlwinds of storms?]

This brief *ubi sunt* passage can be said to share the moralizing tone of many other medieval formulations of the topos, and the third rhetorical question containing the *fumus*-simile clearly echoes Wisdom V, 15, even with some verbatim parallels. However, the fourfold simile of the biblical source comparing the *spes impii* to *lanugo*, *spuma*, *fumus*, and *memoria hospitis unius*³³ has been effectively synthesized by Alcuin into the lively image of the smoke dispersed by furious gusts of wind in stormy weather.

A much more lyrical inspiration is detectable in another epistle by Alcuin, addressed to Richbodus, bishop of Trier (791–804),³⁴ where the affection for the faraway friend and the genuine sadness for the infrequent contact with him find expression in a series of *ubi sunt* questions(39. 2–6):

Ubi est dulcissimum inter nos conloquium? Ubi sacrarum
litterarum studium desiderabile? Ubi laeta facies, quam
conspicere solebam? Ubi communio caritatis, quam
fraternus amor hinc inde exercuit? Ubi saltem memoria
nominis nostri? Ecce totus praeteriit annus, quo nec
litterarum consolatio oculis aduenit, nec salutationis
officium auribus insonuit.

[Where is the most sweet conversation between us?
Where the desirable study of sacred letters? Where the
cheerful face that I used to gaze at? Where the
communion of charity which brotherly love mutually
exercised between you and me? Where (is) at least the
memory of our name? A whole year has passed, in which
neither the consolation of letters reached the eyes, nor
the courtesy of greeting resounded to the ears.]

Here the *topos* acquires a definite personal flavour and effectively gives voice to the individual experience of Alcuin, who, in spite of the prestige he enjoyed at Charlemagne's court and his own dedication to the emperor's reform program, often felt like an exile and wrote nostalgically about the friends and colleagues in York and elsewhere.³⁵

An original elaboration of our motif is also made in a letter addressed to an unnamed English disciple of Alcuin's who has recently taken to a licentious lifestyle and whom the old master is anxious to call back to the virtuous ways of the past.³⁶ The addressee's moral merits and erudition are recalled in a series of *ubi sunt* questions (451. 33–452. 4):

Ubi est nobilissima eruditio tua? ubi est clarissima in scripturis sacris industria tua? Ubi morum excellentia? Ubi animi fortitudo? Ubi timor gehennae? Ubi spes gloriae? Quomodo illa perpetrare non horrescis, quae aliis prohibere debuisses? Converte, obsecro, in te animum tuum ...

[Where is your most noble erudition? Where is your most famous diligence in the Holy Writ? Where (is) the excellence of (your) customs? Where (is) the strength of your soul? Where (is your) fear of hell? Where (is your) hope of glory? How are you not horrified to perpetrate those things which you should have prohibited to others? I beg (you), convert your soul in you ...]

As can be seen, here the *ubi sunt* questions do not stigmatize worldly vanity or, conversely, lament the vanishing of this life's pleasures or of the great men and cities of the past. Instead, they recall the qualities of an individual who is still alive and seems to have only temporarily lost track of them. In this respect, our *topos* does not give voice to a general moralizing meditation but is used to chastise a particular individual and his sins.

Finally, an *ubi sunt* passage is included in a Latin homiletic piece inserted within the *Poenitentiale Theodori*³⁷ in CCC 190,³⁸ one of the witnesses of Wulfstan's 'Commonplace Book.'³⁹ The piece in

question is a short anonymous sermon⁴⁰ on the necessity of the unity of the Church and the transitory nature of worldly glory, which is expressed in a fairly lengthy *ubi sunt* passage:

O homo respice te ipsum quia mortalis es, quia terra es et in terram ibis. Memento quia pulvis es, quia putredo et uermis es. Circumspice eos qui ante te magnis fulsere splendoribus. Ubi sunt qui erant auro gemmisque ornati? ubi sunt exercituum duces, satrape et tyranni? nonne omnia pulvis? nonne omnia fauillae? Respice sepulcra et uide: quis seruus? quis dominus? quis pauper? quis diues? Discerne si potes uinctum a rege, fortem a debili, pulchrum a deformi. Memor itaque naturae si semper fueris, non extollaris aliquando; memor autem eris si te respexeris. Breuis igitur est huius uitae felicitas, modica est huius saeculi gloria; caduca est et fragilis temporalis potentia. Dic ubi sunt reges? ubi principes? ubi potentes saeculi? certe quasi umbra transierunt, uelut fumus⁴¹ euanuerunt.⁴²

[O man, consider yourself, that you are mortal, that you are earth and to the earth you will go. Remember that you are dust, that you are rottenness and worm(s). Look around at those who before you shone with great splendours. Where are those who were adorned with gold and gems? Where are the generals of the armies, the satraps, and the tyrants? Are they not all dust? Are they not all ashes? Watch the graves and see: who (is) the servant? Who (is) the master? Who (is) the poor man? Who (is) the rich man? Distinguish, if you can, the slave from the king, the strong from the weak, the handsome from the ugly. Then, if you have always been mindful of (your) nature, you will never become haughty. But you will always remember (that) if you have looked at yourself. This life's happiness is short, then, this world's glory is scanty, secular power is fleeting and temporary. Tell me, where are the kings? Where (are) the princes? Where (are) the powerful of this world? Surely, they passed away like a shadow, they vanished like smoke.]

As early as 1942 Bethurum identified as a source for this passage the chapter *De breuitate huius uitae* of the *Liber scintillarum*.⁴³ Eventually Cross showed that only the concluding part of the *ubi sunt* passage in the Corpus manuscript, that is from *breuis to euanuerunt*, parallels the *Liber scintillarum*, which in turn relies on *Synonyma* II, 91.⁴⁴ The former section of our passage, in contrast, derives from the chapter *De diuitiis* of the *Sententiae ex operibus sancti Augustini*,⁴⁵ a *florilegium* of Augustine's (or Augustinian) extracts generally attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine.⁴⁶ In turn the ultimate source of Prosper's extract has been traced by the modern editor of the *Sententiae* to the *Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi* by Basil the Great, of which at least two Latin versions exist.⁴⁷ The blending of the two sources within the Corpus piece, however, is effectively accomplished thanks to the unity of subject, so that the two sections form a long exhortation on the vanity of this world. Interestingly, the Corpus passage attests to the combination within an Anglo-Latin composition of two themes, the warning from the dead and the *ubi sunt* motif proper, which occurs at least three times also in Old English homiletic literature.⁴⁸

Interestingly, Wulfstan drew on this *ubi sunt* passage in one of his vernacular homilies, the *Sermo ad populum*,⁴⁹ where the Archbishop freely translates and elaborates on a few lines from CCCC 190 ultimately derived from the *Synonyma* to concoct an introductory meditation about human frailty and a warning about eternal punishment.⁵⁰ The Corpus sermon then provides an important piece of evidence for Wulfstan's probable, though perhaps indirect, knowledge and appreciation of the *Synonyma*. Such a circumstance is all the more intriguing given that one of the most distinctive characteristics of the style of Wulfstan's vernacular works, 'die zweihebige Sinngruppen-Rhythmik,' or long sequences of rhythmical and synonymical two-stress phrases, has ultimately been traced by Funke precisely to Isidore's *Synonyma*.⁵¹ Such a conclusion may seem hurried considering that self-alliterating doublets in general have been shown to be pervasive in the Germanic native tradition.⁵² With particular regard to Wulfstan, it has been demonstrated that identifying his stylistic sources and assessing the extent of his debt to the Latin rhetorical tradition are often quite problematic tasks.⁵³ On the whole, however, Wulfstan's style is perhaps best assessed as 'the convergence of two well-established verbal traditions, Latin and

vernacular.’⁵⁴ A learned Anglo-Saxon such as Wulfstan can well have derived from Latin rhetorical doctrine a linguistic awareness that enhanced his congenital use of rhetorical devices and stylistic effects of Germanic stock. Funke’s remark then poses a new, challenging question, that is, the possible relations between the *Synonyma* and such a celebrated stylist as Wulfstan, and thereby the interaction between a still active native tradition and Latin rhetorical lore.

The *Synonyma* as a Source of Devotional Texts

As Wilmart pointed out, the *Synonyma* ‘ont exercé en effet une influence considérable dans tout ce domaine de la prière privée,’⁵⁵ and they were variously excerpted by the compilers of a number of prayer-books. Indeed, as Sims-Williams has argued, ‘the Latin private prayer-book may have been a specifically English, or at least Insular, innovation.’⁵⁶ Thus, if on the one hand the presence of excerpts and adaptations of the *Synonyma* in some of the earliest extant prayerbooks allows us to assess better the chronological span of that ‘influence considérable,’ on the other it points once again to an early and special popularity enjoyed by the *Synonyma* in the Insular world.

It might be appropriate to begin a presentation of the prayers derived from the Isidorian text with an adaptation of approximately *Synonyma* I, 63–9 which occurs as Prayer 50 (*incipit: Succurre mihi, domine, antequam moriar*) in one of the most important and earliest Anglo-Saxon devotional collections, the early ninth-century *Book of Cerne*,⁵⁷ although here it is assigned to Jerome (*Oratio sancti ieronimis presbyteri*).⁵⁸ As Constantinescu has shown, the Cerne excerpt ultimately derives from a lengthier selection from the *Synonyma*, whose earliest extant attestation can be found in Alcuin’s *De laude Dei*, a *florilegium* of scriptural, patristic, hagio-graphic, devotional, and liturgical pieces.⁵⁹ Alcuin allegedly compiled this collection at York around 790 during a visit to England to negotiate between Charlemagne and Offa, king of the Mercians († 796), but it survives in two later manuscripts. One is the late ninth-century codex El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, B. IV. 17, written in southern France, which interestingly contains a copy of the *Synonyma*,⁶⁰ as well as a

pseudepigraphical text generally attributed to pseudo-Origen, the *Planctus seu Lamentum*, which draws on the *Synonyma*.⁶¹ The other manuscript witness of *De laude Dei* is the tenth-century codex Bamberg, Stadtbibliothek B. II. 10 (Misc. Patr. 17), probably written at Bamberg.⁶² Alcuin apparently confected his *florilegium* on the model of a lost early eighth-century Insular devotional collection. This lost compilation, in turn, has been argued to be the earliest witness of an original 'recueil euchologique,'⁶³ traces of which are detectable in pretty much all Carolingian prayerbooks, in spite of the numerous alterations and syncretistic adaptations to which devotional texts were naturally subject in the course of manuscript transmission.⁶⁴ Alcuin's *De laude Dei* would then be the earliest extant descendant of this putative original collection and can therefore help to identify the sources of much Insular and Carolingian devotional literature as well as tracing their subsequent variants and adaptations.

With regard to the *Synonyma*, the Bamberg witness of *De laude Dei* features a lengthy selection comprising paragraphs 29, 44, 55, 58–60, 63–7, 69–72, and 74 of the first book, and paragraph 60 of the second book of the Isidorian text. According to Constantinescu, the compilers of a number of Carolingian prayerbooks excerpted the excerpt, as it were, that is they derived a number of prayers from the 'original' Bamberg selection; such prayers often overlap, but their text is rarely, if ever, identical, and they also differ in their titles and attribution.⁶⁵

The prayer beginning *Succurre mihi* is by far the most widely attested. It is contained in no fewer than thirty-three manuscript witnesses, the datings of which range from the early ninth century for the *Book of Cerne*⁶⁶ to as late as the early seventeenth century for a Roman manuscript.⁶⁷ In fact, rather than being a single, fixed text, this prayer circulated in at least four versions. A long version is based on *Synonyma* I, 63–5, 43–5, 65–7, 19, 57, and 68–74, and is attested in at least ten manuscripts.⁶⁸ Another briefer version, which relies on *Synonyma* I, 63–5, is attested in at least three manuscripts, including the so-called *Officia per ferias*, a mid-ninth-century collection compiled at St Denis, traditionally associated with Alcuin, but with no direct connection with him,⁶⁹ and the *Psalter of Odbert*, compiled at Saint-Bertin in 999.⁷⁰ A third version of the *Succurre mihi* prayer draws on *Synonyma* I, 63 and 69–71

and is attested in at least three manuscripts, including the eleventh-century English *Bury Psalter*, probably from Canterbury, Christ Church,⁷¹ and a twelfth-century Flemish codex.⁷² Finally, a fourth version combines extracts from *Synonyma* I, 63–7 and 69 with phrases not belonging to the Isidorian text and is attested in two manuscripts, namely the abovementioned *Book of Cerne*⁷³ and the so-called Tegernsee Psalter, written at Tegernsee in the second half of the eleventh century for Würzburg.⁷⁴

Another long prayer beginning *Heu mihi domine tanta sunt uicia mea* draws on *Synonyma* I, 43–5, 57, 63, 62, 64–7, 69–72, and 71, and is attested in at least five manuscripts, the earliest of which is an early ninth-century codex from Tours where the prayer is correctly attributed to Isidore (*Oratio sancti Esidori*).⁷⁵ In a late Vatican manuscript, however, the prayer in question is attributed to Ephraem the Syrian⁷⁶ and is even included in the standard edition of Ephraem's *opera omnia*.⁷⁷ This misattribution to Ephraem is not unique, and at least one attestation of the *Succurre mihi* prayer in an eleventh-century French Psalter is also assigned to the Syrian Father.⁷⁸

A third prayer beginning *Quo fletu flere* depends on *Synonyma* I, 57–9 and is attested in at least four manuscripts, three of which also contain a copy of the *Succurre mihi* prayer.⁷⁹ At least five codices attest to a prayer beginning *Heu mihi infelix anima mea in tantis peccatis*, but although the *incipit* is identical in all the witnesses, the text of the prayer itself is 'très variable' and relies on a varying selection from the first book of the *Synonyma*.⁸⁰ It might be worth noting in passing that in a late Munich manuscript, the prayer in question is attributed to St Anselm.⁸¹

A few late manuscripts dating from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century attest a prayer which begins *Anima mea in angustiis est* and relies on the opening paragraphs of the *Synonyma*, although its text is not identical in all the manuscript witnesses.⁸² A version of this prayer occurs in the above-mentioned Munich manuscript containing a copy of *Heu mihi infelix anima mea in tantis peccatis*, and like the latter prayer this one too is attributed to St Anselm.⁸³ In this regard, it is interesting to note that another fifteenth-century Munich manuscript contains a prayer beginning *Anima mea in angustiis est* within a collection of twenty-four prayers by or attributed to St Anselm.⁸⁴

Finally, a prayer beginning *Omnipotens sempiterne deus, rex regum et dominus dominantium* and featuring only some sparse borrowings from the *Synonyma* is attested in a number of prayerbooks of different date and origin, the earliest of which is an Italian collection written in 821.⁸⁵ At least four other collections include a prayer with the same incipit but with a different text;⁸⁶ in particular, a famous Carolingian collection, the so-called *Fleury Prayerbook*, contains a prayer with the same incipit but which does not include extracts from the *Synonyma*.⁸⁷

In conclusion, I would like to return to the starting point of this survey, namely the *Book of Cerne*. A Mercian origin for the Cerne collection has been advocated, among others, by Brown and Sims-Williams,⁸⁸ and it is worth remembering that one of the earliest Anglo-Saxon manuscript witnesses of the *Synonyma*, Würzburg M. p. th. f. 79, may also have been written in Mercia. Although this connection might be due to sheer coincidence, it is supported by the fact that the Würzburg text of the *Synonyma* agrees with that of Prayer 50 of the *Book of Cerne* in three places against Arévalo's edition, as Sims-Williams has noted.⁸⁹ Also, the text of the *Succurre mihi* prayer in the *Book of Cerne* and in the Tegernsee Psalter – a psalter written for Würzburg⁹⁰ – contains an interpolation featuring a typical 'Irish symptom,' that is the 'thought, word, and deed triad.'⁹¹ Indeed the *Book of Cerne* has been defined as 'a [prayerbook] chiefly of the Irish type' and 'a genuine representative of the spirituality and devotion of the early Irish church.'⁹² More cautiously, Lapidge and Sharpe have classified the *Book of Cerne* as a compilation of possible or arguable Celtic origin,⁹³ and Sims-Williams has pointed out Irish influence on individual Cerne prayers.⁹⁴ Finally, while Brown has pointed out the 'wide range of earlier textual and visual sources' on which the *Book of Cerne* relies and has identified Cerne prayers with 'affiliations which do *not* point towards Irish influence,'⁹⁵ she has nonetheless concluded that 'the stylistic and textual evidence relating to the [*Book of Cerne* and the other] Mercian prayer-books is strongly indicative of active Irish influence.'⁹⁶ In sum, the evidence afforded by the *Book of Cerne* as one of the earliest exemplars of a distinctive English (or Insular) genre⁹⁷ strengthens the case for a privileged and precocious receptiveness of the *Synonyma* in the Insular world. Indeed, 'the iterative, pleonastic

style' often betrayed by Insular prayers suggests again that such receptiveness comprehensively concerned both the affective and effusive religiosity of the Isidorian text and its idiosyncratic style.⁹⁸

The sheer number of prayers excerpted from or variously dependent on the *Synonyma* as well as the number of their manuscript witnesses, their origin and dating represent significant evidence as to the influence consistently exerted by the Isidorian text within prayerbooks from their earliest manifestations through the Carolingian age up to the late Middle Ages and beyond. The misattribution of some of these prayers to other patristic authorities should not be taken to undermine the role of the *Synonyma*. Indeed, such erroneous ascriptions are very common in early prayerbooks,⁹⁹ and can provide supplementary information on the circumstances of transmission of the source-texts of such devotional collections and on the associations that generations of readers may have established between them. For instance, the fact that St Anselm is sometimes assigned the authorship of some of the prayers derived from the *Synonyma*¹⁰⁰ very likely reflects the role of St Anselm himself as a devotional source centuries after Isidore. It also worth remembering that St Anselm was long ascribed the authorship of the *Exhortatio ad contemptum temporalium et desiderium aeternorum*, over two-thirds of which are excerpted from the *Synonyma*.¹⁰¹

The erroneous ascription to Ephraem of the Isidorian prayer in the French Psalter and in the Vatican manuscript¹⁰² is even more intriguing. The extent of the influence and availability of writings by or attributed to Ephraem in Anglo-Saxon England has long been debated, often with overtly negative conclusions.¹⁰³ As Sims-Williams has shown, the study of Insular private prayers is one of the fields where Ephraem's influence is most significant,¹⁰⁴ and one that reveals some intriguing connections between the eastern Father and Isidore, especially with regard to the *Synonyma*. Indeed a number of penitential and devotional themes in Insular private prayers seem to have been derived from Ephraem's or Ephraemic texts and Isidore's *Synonyma*.¹⁰⁵ A prayer attributed to Ephraem (*Oratio ad dominum sancti Effremi*) occurs as Prayer 46 in the *Book of Cerne*.¹⁰⁶ However, despite the explicit attribution to Ephraem in the title, his authorship has been denied, because such an

attribution is most probably the result of a misplaced rubric. In fact it is the preceding piece, namely Prayer 45,¹⁰⁷ that is instead attributable to Ephraem, or so at least runs the evidence afforded by another four prayerbooks where the text of Prayer 45 occurs as well.¹⁰⁸ In one of them, in particular, the *Officia per ferias*,¹⁰⁹ the Ephraemic prayer (*Oratio sancti Effremi diaconi*)¹¹⁰ is preceded by an *Oratio sancti Isidori*, which is a version of the *Succurre mihi* prayer.¹¹¹

Furthermore, in a survey of the manuscript witnesses of Ephraemic writings in the Merovingian and Carolingian age, Ganz has pointed out that the popularity that Ephraemic texts seem to have enjoyed in south Germany may well ‘suggest the legacy of Anglo-Saxon missionaries’ in that region.¹¹² Also, in no fewer than three continental manuscripts written before c. 1030, the *Synonyma* are attested together with Ephraemic texts,¹¹³ and in one of the two groups of manuscripts with Ephraemic material identified by Ganz, sayings attributed to Ephraem are transmitted together with homilies attributed to Boniface,¹¹⁴ the great Anglo-Saxon missionary who was not only familiar with the *Synonyma* but also actively promoted their knowledge within the Anglo-Saxon missions on the continent.¹¹⁵ Finally, an Ephraemic sermon entitled *De paenitentia* or sometimes *De patientia*¹¹⁶ has been associated with the *Synonyma* as putative sources of the Latin poem *De die iudicii*,¹¹⁷ whose traditional attribution to Bede has recently been debated.¹¹⁸ In particular, the author of *De die iudicii* derived from Ephraem a number of penitential motifs, such as the metaphor of *Christus medicus*, which was very popular in early prayers,¹¹⁹ and the insistence on tears as the most effective means of purification and contrition.¹²⁰ The two motifs also feature in the *Synonyma*,¹²¹ but rather than the Isidorian text itself, it is more likely that the author of *De die iudicii* drew on two poems, the *Exhortatio poenitendi*,¹²² and the *Lamentum poenitentiae*,¹²³ which used to be attributed to Isidore, and in some codices occur together with the *Synonyma*. Though spurious, they were likely written in Spain by the ninth century, possibly by Sisbertus of Toledo (s. vii^{ex}),¹²⁴ and without showing any specific debt to the *Synonyma*,¹²⁵ they share with the Isidorian text some devotional and penitential themes as well as some features of the *stilus isidorianus*, such as the asyndetic strings of synonyms and polyptoton. In both poems, the reference to tears is very

insistent,¹²⁶ and although there is no overt use of the image of *Christus medicus*, the underlying metaphor is hinted at in a number of places.¹²⁷ Therefore, rather than positing a direct relationship between *De die iudicii* and the *Synonyma*, one should perhaps speak of thematic and stylistic affinities, all the more so since some distinctive features of *De die iudicii*, such as the onomastic lines and the *cumulatio uerborum*, have also been traced to continental models like Venantius Fortunatus and Dracontius.¹²⁸

***Verba idem significantia*: The *Synonyma* in an Anglo-Saxon Classroom?**

A significant piece of evidence for the probable didactic role played by the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England is at least one pre-Conquest manuscript witness of the Isidorian text, the existence of which in Anglo-Saxon times is attested by the list of the books donated by Æthelwold, one of the fathers of the English Benedictine Reform movement, to the monastery of Medehamstede (today Peterborough, East Anglia).¹²⁹ Æthelwold had restored and endowed this foundation after the disruption of Viking raids and, in Lapidge's words, 'was anxious to establish [a curriculum similar to the one implemented at Winchester] in his newly founded monastery.'¹³⁰ Indeed, at least three of the twenty-one books featured in the list, namely an *Expositio hebreorum nominum* (presumably a copy of Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*),¹³¹ *De litteris grecorum* (presumably a Greek-Latin glossary),¹³² and, especially, the long poem by Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, *Bella parisiacae urbis*,¹³³ are texts which would fit well in the tenth-century English curriculum. The study of Abbo's poem, in particular its third book, of glossaries, and of Aldhelm, in particular his prose treatise *De uirginitate*, was a distinctive trait of the Anglo-Saxon curriculum of the tenth century,¹³⁴ and was aimed at training students in the so-called hermeneutic style.¹³⁵

The *Synonyma* themselves can hardly be described as a hermeneutic text, insofar as their vocabulary is not made up of loanwords, archaisms, neologisms, and other rare words.¹³⁶ However, the Isidorian work, centred as it was on synonymical variation, may well have appealed to Æthelwold and his school at

Winchester and even served the principles of word selection implemented in the 'Winchester vocabulary'.¹³⁷ In this regard, it is noteworthy that Lapidge has identified one of the items in Æthelwold's booklist (an unspecified *Liber differentiarum*) with another Isidorian text, namely *De differentiis uerborum*,¹³⁸ which consists of a lexicon where 482 pairs of synonyms (and sometimes homophones) are arranged according to a loosely thematic principle and the difference in their meaning is explained. The *Synonyma* and the *De differentiis uerborum* can be considered to be complementary texts, since the knowledge of a wide range of synonyms, on the one hand, and the ability to differentiate and choose them, on the other, was one of the main tasks Anglo-Saxon students had to face, not only in the acquisition of a foreign language such as Latin, but also in the correct and effective use of the vernacular.¹³⁹ The inclusion of both the *Synonyma* and *De differentiis uerborum* in a booklist which betrays a concern for curriculum texts might well suggest a didactic role for these Isidorian texts within the pedagogical practices championed by the Benedictine Reform, a suggestion further corroborated by the evidence provided by the *Colloquia* of Ælfric Bata, a late representative of the same monastic movement.

The *Colloquia* by Ælfric and his disciple Ælfric Bata are made up of more or less realistic dialogues that take place between different members of the monastic community and are specifically designed to make them acquire Latin vocabulary as well as improving their knowledge of Latin grammar.¹⁴⁰ As has been pointed out, the *Synonyma* too are structured within a dialogical frame between *Homo* and *Ratio*, which the Anglo-Saxon witnesses of the Isidorian text consistently signal by means of rubrics or marginal notations.¹⁴¹ Aldhelm, the earliest witness to the knowledge of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England, mentions them as an example of text employing a dialogical structure,¹⁴² and one may well wonder whether this dialectic component could have been a further enticement of the Isidorian text appealing to the pedagogues of the Benedictine Reform.

The dramatic dimension and the immediacy of the situation presented in the scholastic *colloquia* involved students both emotionally and intellectually, and as such they seem to have been a didactic tool of great efficacy, although a certain lexicographical

indulgence is also detectable, especially in Bata.¹⁴³ The use of synonyms is naturally integral to this pedagogical project, as the lists of redundant or alternative items which Bata gives his readers allow the teacher to do without the troublesome shifting between languages that would interfere with language acquisition on the student's part. On the other hand, by means of the strings of lexical items which are semantically equivalent but morphologically at variance with each other, students were made aware of the different grammatical forms as well as able to produce different exchanges depending on which 'entry' they chose from the menus of synonymous items.¹⁴⁴

In particular, the *colloquium* where Ælfric Bata draws on the *Synonyma*, that is *Colloquium* 28 of Gwara and Porter's edition, consists of a rather emphatic exchange between the master and an oblate who has stolen some apples. An extensive portion of their dialogue derives precisely from the first exchange between *Homo*, expressing his contrition and lamenting his misery, and *Ratio*, admonishing and comforting him in the first book of the *Synonyma*.

One can compare the first lines of the *lamentum* of the oblate and the corresponding section from the Isidorian source (parallels are highlighted in bold):

Vae est mihi **misero! Ut quid natus sum? Melius** mihi
esset modo **mortuum esse quam** sic miserabiliter
uiuere. Ubique me infelicitas mea persequitur.
Angustia mei **animi** turbat me nimis, et affligit.
Circumdatus sum malis, circumseptus erumna magna,
obrutus **aduersis et miseriis, et oppressus infelicitate**
et **angustiis. Domi forisque calamitas me non**
deserit.¹⁴⁵

[Woe is me, why was I ever born? It would be better for me to die now than to live so miserably. My bad luck pursues me everywhere. The anxiety of my mind disturbs me terribly and torments me. I am surrounded by ills. I am bounded by great trouble, overwhelmed by ills and miseries, oppressed by bad luck and tribulations. At home or abroad, disaster never leaves me.]¹⁴⁶

Anima mea in angustiis est, spiritus meus aestuat, cor meum fluctuat, angustia animi possidet me. **Angustia animi** affligit me, **circumdatus sum** omnibus **malis**, **circumseptus aerumnis**, circumclusus **aduersis**, obsitus **miseriis**, opertus **infelicitate**, **oppressus angustiis**,..., **ubique me infelicitas mea persequitur**, **domi forisque mea calamitas me non deserit**.... Cur infelix **natus sum**?... **ut quid miser** hanc lucem uidi? **ut quid misero** huius uitae ortus occurrit? ... **melius** est bene **mori** **quam** male **uiuere**; melius est non esse quam infelicitate esse[.]¹⁴⁷

[My soul is in anxiety, my spirit is troubled, my heart is seething, my mind's anxiety possesses me. My mind's anxiety afflicts me, I am surrounded by all afflictions, encircled by adversities, filled with miseries, covered with unhappiness, oppressed by anxieties, ... my unhappiness persecutes me everywhere, at home or outside, my disgrace does not leave me. ... Why was I born, miserable (me)? ... Why did I, wretched, ever see this light? Why did the beginning of this life ever occur to wretched me? ... It is better to die well than to live poorly; it is better not to be than to be unhappily.]

As can be seen, Ælfric Bata has shortened the long strings of synonymous *commata*, selecting just some of them and sometimes conflating two or more of them into just one *comma*.¹⁴⁸ Bata has also freely altered the succession of the *commata*, so that the phrase 'Ubique me infelicitas mea persequitur' (identical to the one in the Isidorian source) precedes the description of the oblate's distress ('Angustia mei animi ... '), while in the Isidorian source the sequence is the reverse. Equally, the very first phrases of the oblate's speech, where he wishes he hadn't been born, derive from a section of the *Synonyma* which follows at some distance in the PL printed version (Book I, 19–21). Finally, Bata has at times inserted some slight alterations into the *commata* he borrowed from the Isidorian source (compare, for example, the Isidorian 'circumseptus aerumnis' with Bata's 'circumseptus erumna magna'), and one is tempted to think that the Benedictine monk might have indulged in rivalling his source in finding out even

further different synonyms and variations. A noticeable example of Bata's synonymical bent can be found just a few lines after the above-quoted passage, where our oblate complains that he has been deserted by all his friends, relatives, and acquaintances: 'Desertus sum ab omnibus amicis meis et proximis et notis et propinquis' [I have been deserted by all my friends, family, acquaintances, and kin], while the Isidorian source simply states: 'desertus sum ab omnibus hominibus' [I have been deserted by all men].

In the passage quoted above, Bata has 'angustia mei animi turbat me nimis' where the verb *turbare* is at variance with the verb phrases of the *Synonyma* expressing anguish, such as *in angustia est*, *aestuat*, *fluctuat*. Equally, Bata has 'obrutus aduersis et miseriis' where *obrutus* is yet another synonym of the Isidorian triad *obsitus/opertus/oppressus*. Indeed, without excluding that *obrutus* might well be an obvious misreading of *obsitus*, one might wonder whether such variations and alterations may perhaps be the result of a mnemonic recollection of the Isidorian text on Bata's part.¹⁴⁹ However, as we shall see, it has been argued that the latter two examples of synonymical variations were borrowed by Bata from a glossed copy of the *Synonyma*.¹⁵⁰

In sum, it can be concluded that in his use of the *Synonyma* Bata reveals a great familiarity with the Isidorian text and appears to be at ease with the 'tricks of the trade' of the synonymical prose, therefore managing to give his own interpretation of it even when he is heavily indebted to his source.

Gwara has suggested that Bata must have drawn on a glossed copy of the *Synonyma* and that the latter copy must have been one closely related to Harley 110 and, especially, CCCC 448.¹⁵¹ Gwara has rested his argument on five interpolations in the section of the *Synonyma* borrowed in Bata's *Colloquium* 28, showing that these interpolations consist in the supplanting of Isidorian textual material with interlinear glosses found in the Corpus and Harley manuscripts. Two such interpolations have already been mentioned: *obrutus*, which glosses *obsitus* in both our manuscripts,¹⁵² and *turbat*, which, according to Gwara, may well have been derived from *perturbatur* glossing *fluctuat* in the Corpus manuscript.¹⁵³ The latter interpolation, in particular, would show 'that Bata drew from a manuscript closer to [CCCC 448], a

Canterbury book, than to Harley 110, a Winchester production.’¹⁵⁴

On the whole I find Gwara’s argument concerning Bata’s dependence on a glossed copy of the *Synonyma* convincing, although some of his conclusions are slightly hurried and his essay is often imprecise.¹⁵⁵ In particular, when discussing the possible origin of Bata’s reading *turbat* from the Corpus interpretamentum *perturbatur* glossing *fluctuat*, Gwara fails to consider that Harley 110 too features a gloss to *fluctuat*, that is *perturbat*.¹⁵⁶ Also, Gwara confuses the place of origin of Harley 110 and CCC 448, because the former is a Canterbury book, and the latter a south-English codex, which eventually reached Winchester.¹⁵⁷ Finally, Gwara points out that ‘one significant variant’ shared by the two codices, namely *cruor lacrimarum*,¹⁵⁸ is also found in Bata’s text, thus concluding that ‘Bata must therefore have used a manuscript belonging to a *Synonyma* family represented by [the Harley and Corpus manuscripts].’¹⁵⁹ In fact, such a variant is not unique to our two manuscripts, but is featured in the Royal manuscript as well,¹⁶⁰ as Gwara himself notes in his *apparatus*.¹⁶¹ In sum, I think that in his eagerness to associate Bata with the Corpus and Harley manuscripts, especially the former, and to show that these two codices represent a common branch in the textual tradition of the *Synonyma*, Gwara has sometimes forced his argument and made some mistakes. But it seems clear that a number of variants in Bata’s pedagogical text can be traced to the common stock of glosses preserved by the Corpus and Harley manuscripts.

A further point of interest is that the Corpus and Harley codices, in their turn, seem to point to a didactic context themselves, since both contain a text which has long been recognized to be part of the Anglo-Saxon curriculum, the *Epigrammata* of Prosper of Aquitaine.¹⁶² Furthermore, the typology of the glosses to the *Synonyma* in both manuscripts as well as their frequency and explanatory character suggest that the Corpus and Harley codices (or the ancestor from which both their text and glossing seem to have ultimately derived) were intended for some educational use, whether aimed at classroom teaching or at private study.¹⁶³

Bata has also been associated with another Anglo-Saxon witness of the *Synonyma*, that is Cotton Tiberius A. iii, which contains *Warna*, an Old English epitome of the Isidorian text.¹⁶⁴

The Tiberius manuscript is a sizeable heterogeneous codex¹⁶⁵ and one of the most representative witnesses to the culture and interests of the Benedictine Reform movement. Among its numerous texts, Tiberius A. iii contains the Benedictine Rule, one of the two surviving copies of the *Regularis concordia*,¹⁶⁶ and one of the three surviving copies of Ælfric's *Colloquy*,¹⁶⁷ all of them accompanied by a continuous Old English inter-linear gloss. The vernacular glossing is one of the most striking features of the Tiberius manuscript, since it concerns at least seven of its texts,¹⁶⁸ and such intense glossing has been interpreted as an obvious indication of the pedagogical design of the Tiberius manuscript.¹⁶⁹ In particular, Porter has claimed that 'the continuous glosses of Cotton Tiberius A. iii [reflect] the Benedictine educational tradition,'¹⁷⁰ but other scholars, such as Clayton and Magennis, have instead considered the Tiberius manuscript to be 'a type of reference book, preserving texts of interest to the [monastic] community.'¹⁷¹

Tiberius A. iii can perhaps be best described as a bilingual (Latin and Old English) monastic miscellany, containing a wide and diverse – but not haphazard and incoherent – variety of texts, ranging from the didactic to the devotional, from the homiletic and eschatological to the liturgical.¹⁷² In particular, it has been pointed out that the Tiberius collection is 'organized around the two poles of monastic and pastoral concerns.'¹⁷³

In this respect, it can be said that *Warna* perfectly suits such a context, since, with its focus on the *ubi sunt* topos, it combines spiritual meditation and hortatory injunction.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, our epitome is by no means an isolated item within the Tiberius collection, but can be associated with other texts there, such as a number of homiletic pieces and confessional prayers,¹⁷⁵ notably an excerpt from the Alfredian translation of Augustine's *Soliloquia*.¹⁷⁶ It is also worth pointing out that the vernacular extract from the *Synonyma* is closely followed by two analogous pieces, namely the Old English translations of chapters xiv and xxvi of Alcuin's *De uirtutibus et uitiis*,¹⁷⁷ a text dependent on the *Synonyma*,¹⁷⁸ and the diffusion of which in Anglo-Saxon England seems to offer some interesting connections and parallels with that of the Isidorian text. As we have seen, vernacular epitomes from both Latin texts are found almost side by side in the Tiberius

codex, and another Old English translation comprising chapters i–xvi from Alcuin’s *Liber* is contained in a mid-twelfth-century codex, Cotton Vespasian D. xiv, fols. 4–169, which was eventually bound with the earlier codex which bears the same classmark and which is one of the Anglo-Saxon witnesses of the *Synonyma*.¹⁷⁹ Finally, Alcuin’s *Liber* was turned into three Latin homilies contained in Cambridge, Pembroke College 25,¹⁸⁰ a kind of adaptation which can largely be compared with the homiletic recasting – though in the vernacular in this case – of the *Synonyma* in Vercelli xxii.¹⁸¹

Even though the Tiberius epitome of the *Synonyma* does not itself have a didactic character, an investigation of the relationship between the Tiberius manuscript and Ælfric Bata indirectly affords some evidence about the pedagogical potential of the *Synonyma* and about the centres where such a potentiality could have been put to good use. The name of Ælfric Bata (*Eluricus Bate*) appears twice on what originally was the recto of the first folio of the Tiberius manuscript (today fol. 117), where a table of contents of the codex has been scribbled.¹⁸² In the first occurrence, Bata’s name stands alone in the top left margin of the folio as if to indicate that he owned or assembled the collection;¹⁸³ in the second, he is presented as the author of the *Regularis concordia* (‘Regula elurici bate glosata anglice’). Alongside the Tiberius table of contents, Bata’s name occurs again twice in the catalogue of the library of Christ Church, Canterbury, which was compiled in the 1320s at the bidding of Prior Henry of Eastry. Two volumes of this catalogue are associated with Bata (items 296 and 297) and, at least as far as the latter is concerned, Gneuss has been tempted to identify it with the Tiberius manuscript, although he considers it safer to say that the two Eastry items and Tiberius A.iii are probably sister codices.¹⁸⁴

While Kornexl has dismissed any possible attribution to Ælfric Bata of the *Regularis concordia*,¹⁸⁵ scholars have not been equally definite when assessing the connection between Bata and the Tiberius manuscript. Given the extremely scanty evidence on Bata’s life,¹⁸⁶ all conclusions are necessarily speculative. However, there seems to be some agreement that Bata could well have played some role in the production and compilation of the Tiberius collection, when he (allegedly) served for a time as a master at Christ Church, Canterbury. Indeed, Kornexl has suggested that

Bata may have been ‘ein vorübergehend im [Kathedralkloster Christ Church Lehrender, der] das Kloster mit Texten versorgt hat, sie vielleicht auch nur zum Kopieren zur Verfügung stellte und dabei darauf bestand, als Besitzer oder auch Beschaffer genannt zu werden.’¹⁸⁷

One of the texts of the Tiberius collection that probably best reflects Bata’s interests and preoccupations as a teacher is Ælfric’s *Colloquy*, a text which together with the *Grammar* and *Glossary* makes up a crucial triad within the didactic production of the Benedictine Reform and with which Bata must have been very familiar. Ælfric’s *Colloquy* survives in three versions: besides that in the Tiberius manuscript, two more versions are found in Oxford, St John’s College 154, and in a dismembered codex, the leaves of which now constitute Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum, M 16. 2 and London, BL, Additional 32346.¹⁸⁸ The Oxford copy of the *Colloquy* is in fact an enlarged recasting by Ælfric Bata.¹⁸⁹ In addition, the epilogue of the Tiberius version of the *Colloquy* must undoubtedly be spurious, since its style and vocabulary are inconsistent with the rest of the text and betray affiliations with the hermeneutic style and with Bata’s own idiosyncratic vocabulary in particular.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, Porter has argued that Bata may well be responsible also for the interpolations in the Tiberius copy of Ælfric’s *Colloquy* and that the Old English continuous interlinear gloss to it likely originated with Bata or his school.¹⁹¹ Be that as it may, it has been shown that at least eight Old English glosses to Bata’s recasting of Ælfric’s *Colloquy* in the Oxford manuscript have counterparts in the Old English continuous gloss to the Tiberius version of the same text.¹⁹² The fact that some of these glosses include rare terms, such as *forlypenes* glossing *nauffragium*,¹⁹³ and are closely grouped should exclude mere coincidence, and at least these eight glosses to both the Oxford and Tiberius versions of Ælfric’s *Colloquy* must therefore be related.

Porter concluded that ‘whether or not Bata wrote the [continuous gloss to the Tiberius *Colloquy*], he used it in teaching, since the occasional glosses in the Oxford [version of the *Colloquy*] come directly from [Tiberius].’¹⁹⁴ However, the Oxford manuscript and its glossing predate the Tiberius codex.¹⁹⁵ It could then be speculated that the eight glosses common to the Oxford and Tiberius versions of Ælfric’s *Colloquy* may derive from a pre-

existing stock of glosses to Ælfric's *Colloquy* or else from yet another glossed witness of this text. This suggestion seems to be somewhat substantiated by the fact that the overwhelming majority of the glosses, both in Latin and Old English, to Bata's enlarged version of Ælfric's *Colloquy* in the Oxford manuscript have been drawn from Ælfric's *Glossary*.¹⁹⁶ We may therefore reasonably attribute the glosses both to the Oxford *Colloquy* and to the Tiberius one to the activity of glossators who had great familiarity with and easy access to Ælfric's works.

Moreover, a number of textual correspondences between the Tiberius version of Ælfric's *Colloquy* and Bata's own *Colloquia* have been pointed out.¹⁹⁷ Two of these correspondences concern precisely Bata's *Colloquium* 28, the one most indebted to the *Synonyma*. One may compare:

Karius esset mihi mortuum esse modo quam talia flagella
sustinere[;]¹⁹⁸

[It would be dearer to me to be dead than to bear such
scourges]

Carius est nobis flagellari pro doctrina quam nescire[;]¹⁹⁹

[It is dearer to us to be flogged for doctrine's sake than to
be ignorant]

semper cautus esse possum[;]²⁰⁰

[I can always be cautious]

caute me tenui.²⁰¹

[I restrained myself cautiously.]

These correspondences between the text of Bata's *Colloquium* 28 and the Tiberius version of Ælfric's *Colloquy* do seem to provide further ground for associating Bata with the Tiberius manuscript. Such an association is certainly attractive, since it would also emphasize Bata's familiarity with the *Synonyma*, insofar as the Isidorian text was not only extensively drawn on in Bata's

Colloquia, but also included (though in the form of a vernacular epitome) in a codex such as Tiberius A. iii, which seems to be closely connected with Bata.

Tiberius A. iii is certainly a Canterbury book, most likely a Christ Church production, as Gneuss has recently reaffirmed.²⁰² So is Harley 110, while CCCC 448, *pace* Gwara, is a south-English codex, probably a Worcester one, which reached Winchester after the Norman Conquest. Little as we know about Bata, Canterbury, in particular Christ Church, seems to be the most probable site of at least part of his career (although this supposition is partly based on the evidence of the Tiberius codex).²⁰³ The most important vernacular adaptation of the *Synonyma*, that is Vercelli xxii, is contained in a manuscript which apparently originated in Canterbury, St Augustine's.²⁰⁴ In Winchester too, Æthelwold must have had at least a spare copy of the *Synonyma* to send to the foundation of Medehamstede.²⁰⁵ In sum, in both of the two crucial centres of the Benedictine Reform movement, Canterbury and Winchester, the *Synonyma* appear to have been alive and circulating freely. Their appreciation *per se* cannot of course be taken as positive proof for their use within the Anglo-Saxon classroom, but the evidence provided by manuscripts such as CCCC 448 and Harley 110, on the one hand, and, on the other, the knowledge of the *Synonyma* on the part of Aldhelm, 'the first Englishman of letters',²⁰⁶ as well as of Æthelwold, 'the decisive force behind the development of [the Winchester vocabulary],'²⁰⁷ and Ælfric Bata, a late representative of the Benedictine Reform pedagogy, allows us to conclude that the Anglo-Saxon *literati* were well aware of the pedagogical potential of the *Synonyma*. During the late Anglo-Saxon period, in particular, it can be said that the Isidorian text proved a useful didactic tool in language teaching and its distinctive synonymical style may well have contributed to the Winchester school's study of *synonymia* as an effective means towards the definition of a lexicon which combined 'a strong literary flavour'²⁰⁸ with an accurate expression of concepts central to the values of Benedictine monasticism.²⁰⁹

The evidence discussed in this chapter further clarifies the versatility and complexity of a text such as the *Synonyma* and the resourceful use that the Anglo-Saxons in turn made of them. As we have seen, different generations of Anglo-Saxon scholars, from

Aldhelm to Æthelwold up to Ælfric Bata, were aware of the didactic potentialities of the Isidorian text and contributed to make it a celebrated model of style. At the same time, the presence of manifold prayers excerpted from the *Synonyma* in prayerbooks dating from the ninth to the seventeenth century shows that the Isidorian text proved an extremely rich and inspirational source for devotional and penitential themes throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. In particular, it is noteworthy that the extant prayers excerpted from the *Synonyma* seem to have ultimately derived from an Insular collection, the earliest attestation of which is Alcuin's *De laude Dei*. If on the one hand this circumstance shows the debt of Carolingian devotional literature to Insular sources, on the other it seems to confirm the special and precocious popularity enjoyed by the *Synonyma* in the British Isles.

Finally, as to the relationship between Isidore and Ephraem, their association in the manuscript tradition and even misattribution²¹⁰ were interpreted by Bishop as a piece of evidence supporting his conviction about the fundamental role played by Visigothic Spain in the transmission of the eastern Fathers to the west and about the existence of direct routes from Spain to Ireland.²¹¹ In particular, Bishop thought he had found proof of such a connection in the now (in)famous 'Spanish symptoms' of much Insular devotional and liturgical material.²¹² The question concerning the routes linking the British Isles and Visigothic Spain has already been addressed, and it has been pointed out that there has been much speculation on this matter.²¹³ In particular, the association between Isidore's *Synonyma* and Ephraem in prayers and other texts of devotional and penitential content does not need to be explained *a priori* by Spanish transmission of Ephraemic texts, since the textual evidence would instead suggest an association based on and motivated by similar contents and style.²¹⁴ In this respect, the link between the two Fathers offers some precious hints towards the identification of that corpus of penitential, devotional, and eschatological texts which represent the literary milieu of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England. The following chapter will attempt to sketch such a milieu and to picture the Anglo-Saxon library to which the *Synonyma* virtually belonged.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England: Some Conclusions

The evidence presented in the previous chapters shows that Isidore's *Synonyma* were well known and influential among the Anglo-Saxons. Some questions remain concerning the text's date of arrival in the British Isles, and the routes of its transmission. However, it is clear that Aldhelm († 709 or 710) knew the *Synonyma*, thus attesting to their presence in England by the end of the seventh century, while at least two surviving witnesses, namely the St Petersburg and the Würzburg manuscripts, date to the first half of the eighth century. No fewer than six other witnesses of the *Synonyma* survive from the Anglo-Saxon period, and the *Synonyma* were apparently also intensively copied in the Anglo-Saxon centres on the continent during Boniface's lifetime (c. 675–754) and beyond. As with other texts, the ninth century represents a gap in the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma*. However, the evidence afforded by King Wiglaf's charter of 836, on the one hand, and by the *Book of Cerne*, on the other, allows us to suggest a continuity in the presence of the *Synonyma* in pre-Conquest England.¹

The *Synonyma* proved especially popular with Anglo-Saxon anonymous homilists. This homiletic dimension of the Isidorian text is already attested in Anglo-Saxon England by the manuscript Royal 5. E. xix, which contains the *Synonyma* alongside twelve homilies traceable to that influential Carolingian sermonary known as the Homiliary of Saint-Père de Chartres.² What is more, the most extensive extant vernacular adaptation of the Isidorian text is indeed an anonymous homily, namely Vercelli xxii. It has been argued that the Vercelli homily represents the translation and conflation into the vernacular of at least two ultimate Latin sources, namely the *Synonyma* and the pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo ad fratres* 58, rather than an adaptation from a pre-existing Old

English translation of the *Synonyma*. While such a conclusion does not exclude the possibility that vernacular translations of the *Synonyma* existed, it leaves open the question of whether the compiler of Vercelli xxii drew on a complete copy of the *Synonyma*, on an epitome, or – as seems more plausible – on a pre-existing Latin composite adaptation.³ It has been shown that both complete copies and epitomes of the *Synonyma* were circulating in Anglo-Saxon England. Indeed, epitomes and recastings of the Isidorian text were known and produced in England even well after the Norman Conquest and up to the Renaissance.⁴

The *Synonyma* were the major ultimate patristic source for the widespread *ubi sunt* motif in both Old English and Anglo-Latin literature. The analysis of the Old English *ubi sunt* passages in both homilies and poems such as *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer* has offered an interesting perspective on the interaction of Latin and Old English. As the discussion of the *ubi sunt* topos has shown, the Old English writers freely adapted and adopted their Latin source, by moulding Latinate and Christian themes in a rhetorical framework which employed devices and patterns typical of the native tradition. In particular, it is noteworthy that the synonymical variation and paraphrase, which are so much a distinctive feature of the style of the *Synonyma*, were achieved in numerous Old English versions of the *ubi sunt* topos by means of an imaginative use of traditional vernacular rhetoric.⁵ What is more, the influence of such native stylistic devices as alliteration, echoic repetition, and patterned syntax is also active within Anglo-Latin elaborations of the topos, as the relevant passages from Aldhelm's *Epistola ad Acircium* and Boniface's *Epistola* 9 clearly show.⁶

The *ubi sunt* motif naturally combined with other penitential and eschatological motifs that frequently occur in Old English homiletics, such as the injunction to visit the graves of the dead,⁷ and various themes related to the soul-and-body legend.⁸ A number of studies have already ascertained that the highly syncretistic and imaginative Anglo-Saxon eschatology and cosmology are indebted to a large corpus of apocryphal apocalypses and visions of the otherworld, ultimately of eastern origin, first of all the *Visio Sancti Pauli*.⁹ Also, it has recently been argued that Anglo-Saxon vision and homiletic literature is

permeated by a fourfold and hierarchical structure of the otherworld, where two distinct regions of beatitude correspond to two distinct regions of punishment.¹⁰ Kabir has traced this structured and hierarchical vision of the otherworld back to the Byzantine doctrine of ‘delayed retribution.’ According to such a doctrine, between death and Doomsday both the souls of the just and the souls of the sinners dwell in two interim regions, which are distinct from heaven and hell proper from both a spatio-temporal and a ‘qualitative’ point of view, insofar as there the souls are given just a prelude of the eternal bliss or damnation.¹¹

Interestingly, the suggested source for the fourfold otherworld in Anglo-Saxon literature is the late seventh-century *Prognosticon futuri saeculi* by Julian of Toledo,¹² ‘a compendium [recycling] earlier patristic opinion ... to satisfy growing medieval interest in both final and interim eschatology.’¹³ In particular, Julian draws on Isidore’s opinion that there are two paradises, one on earth, which was once the abode of Adam and Eve, and one in heaven, which accommodates the souls of the just who are awaiting Doomsday.¹⁴ Isidore may well have derived this twofold vision of paradise from the Byzantine doctrine of delayed retribution circulating in those areas of seventh-century Spain still under Byzantine influence.¹⁵ Eventually, Julian capitalized on this Isidorian distinction between the two paradises and introduced two additional contrasts, namely that between paradise (as a post-mortem abode) and heaven (as a post-Doomsday abode), as well as between two hells, with the definitive, more horrible one situated below the provisional.¹⁶

In the Old English texts, such a fourfold structure of the otherworld is, however, mostly implicit, and the difference between interim and final eschatology is far from neatly drawn. As Gatch has pointed out, the eschatology of Old English homilies ‘as to the condition of the soul between death and the resurrection of the body’ is inherently ambiguous,¹⁷ and the descriptions of death and the post-mortem interim as well as of Doomsday in many of the Vercelli homilies are often confused by the use of conflicting imagery.¹⁸ Thus, when adapted and elaborated by the compilers of Old English anonymous homilies, Julian’s structured vision of the fourfold otherworld – like other biblical or patristic material – was employed with great versatility and freedom, and, consequently,

its use often resulted in incongruity.¹⁹

That having been said, it is nevertheless crucial to this study that a late seventh-century Spanish text apparently underlies the vision of the otherworld in a significant number of Old English homilies as well as in another genre where the influence of the *Synonyma* has been pervasive, namely private prayers.²⁰ In spite of the shifting terminology and largely implicit distinctions in the descriptions of paradise and heaven within Anglo-Saxon prayerbooks, 'the authors of the prayers and the visions obviously share the same world-view.'²¹ Indeed, the separation between paradise and heaven was functional to the devotional ends of the Church, insofar as the hierarchy between the two realms and the not-guaranteed 'promotion' from the former to the latter resulted in an increased importance of intercession.²² In particular, the distinction between paradise and heaven is most clearly drawn in the *Book of Cerne*, and its very Prayer 50, derived from the *Synonyma*,²³ features an interpolation to the Isidorian text that concerns precisely an eschatological description of the heavenly city, identified as *paradisus deliciarum*.²⁴

According to Kabir,²⁵ the earliest attestations to the fourfold other-world of Julian's *Prognosticon* in Anglo-Saxon England are as early as Boniface's Vision of the Monk of Much Wenlock,²⁶ and Bede's Vision of Drythelm.²⁷ Julian's work would then have arrived in England at a date very close to that of its composition. Indeed, Kabir suggests that it probably followed a route from Visigothic Spain to England via Ireland, and that, in turn, it was mainly by means of Irish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries that the *Prognosticon* and the derivative Anglo-Latin visions were disseminated in continental monasteries from the ninth century onwards.²⁸

As has been pointed out earlier, the feasibility of such a direct route from Visigothic Spain to Ireland as well as the role of the Irish in the transmission of texts from seventh-century Spain, and of the *Synonyma* in particular, is still a controversial point.²⁹ The 'Irish connection,' however, emerges again with regard to the apocryphal lore underlying the eschatology and cosmology of so many Old English anonymous homilies.³⁰ The penchant of Irish Christianity for apocryphal sources, in particular those of eschatological and cosmological content, has long been

established,³¹ and so has the debt of the Anglo-Saxons to the Irish in such matters.³² 'Irish symptoms' have been detected also in Anglo-Latin prayers,³³ in particular in the *Book of Cerne*, where the prayer excerpted from the *Synonyma* features the typically Irish 'thought-word-deed' triad.³⁴ In sum, while the Irish did not necessarily represent the earliest or most active agents for the dissemination of the *Synonyma* among the Anglo-Saxons,³⁵ the textual evidence shows that the Isidorian text in Anglo-Saxon England can ultimately be associated with writings with marked Irish affiliations, and that, together with such texts, the Isidorian work contributed to the definition of a specifically Anglo-Saxon stock of homiletic and devotional motifs.³⁶ Furthermore, this Irish-influenced literary and theological milieu is also defined by stylistic features and modes of expression which represent a sort of meeting point between the Irish fondness for the 'enumerative style,' on the one hand, and the *stilus isidorianus*, with its patterned iteration of words and phrases and with its litanic runs of parallel or antithetical *commata*, on the other.³⁷

The Vercelli Book, in particular, is crucial to the identification of the literary milieu of the *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England and of the library where the Isidorian text could be virtually located. This 'most idiosyncratic book'³⁸ seems indeed to have a special relationship with the *Synonyma*, since at least three of its homiletic items are ultimately indebted to the Isidorian source, namely Vercelli x, Vercelli xxii, and Vercelli xxiii. As we have seen, homily xxii is a unique piece, but Vercelli x, especially its *ubi sunt* section, was variously adapted and excerpted by the compilers of composite homilies in the late Anglo-Saxon period.³⁹ In general, the Vercelli homilies can be said to be 'central to the production of anonymous homilies'⁴⁰ in pre-Conquest England and therefore provide essential evidence of the vernacular homiletic tradition predating the only two named authors of Old English homilies, Ælfric and Wulfstan.⁴¹ Together with the six poems of the codex, the Vercelli homilies make up an eclectic though at the same time 'uniform collection of pious reading,' comprising texts 'of diverse authorship and age'⁴² and ranging from the sermon to the saint's life, from the religious narrative to the frankly eschatological vision. Such material must have been assembled from a variety of copy-texts, and the Vercelli scribe clearly had access to a vast library of homiletic and devotional writings.⁴³ This library drawn

on by the Vercelli collector 'was responsible, directly or indirectly, for the production of the greatest number of homiletic manuscripts' and may even have survived the Conquest.⁴⁴

From the evidence so far presented, it seems that the *Synonyma* too were part of this library and Scragg's conclusion that the most likely place where such a wide range of material could have been available was St Augustine's, Canterbury,⁴⁵ is complementary to the knowledge and use of the *Synonyma* in the two other major cultural centres of the late Anglo-Saxon period, namely Winchester and Christ Church, Canterbury, on the part of leading figures of the Benedictine pedagogy such as Æthelwold and Ælfric Bata.⁴⁶ The role of the *Synonyma* in the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon scholastic colloquies and, possibly, in the elaboration of Winchester vocabulary represents another tantalizing aspect of the multi-faceted and long-lasting fascination that the Isidorian text exerted on generations of both learned and illiterate faithful throughout the Anglo-Saxon period and well beyond the Norman Conquest up until Thomas Hoccleve. The *Synonyma* proved an exceptionally complex and sophisticated, yet very accessible, text. The aim of the present study has been to outline the distinctiveness of its reception in Anglo-Saxon England and to reach some positive conclusions as to the pervasive, multilayered influence the *Synonyma* exerted on both Old English and Anglo-Latin literature. It is hoped that the manuscript and literary evidence which has been surveyed in this book has contributed some stimulating insights into the religious and literary culture of Anglo-Saxon England.

Notes

1. Isidore of Seville: His Life and Culture

- 1 See Canon ii of the eighth council of Toledo in Martínez Díez, *La colección canónica hispana*, V, 411. This same canon quotes from *Synonyma* II, 58, and was in turn borrowed by a great many collections of the late Middle Ages: see Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 134–6; see also below, [chapter 2](#), p. 34, and [chapter 3](#), n. 155.
- 2 'Vedi oltre fiammeggiar l'ardente spiro / d'Isidoro, di Beda e di Riccardo' (Canto X, 130–1): Giacalone, *Paradiso*, 139. On Isidore's fortune in the early Middle Ages, see Anspach, 'Das Fortleben Isidors'; Bischoff, 'Die europäische Verbreitung'; and Hillgarth, 'The Position of Isidorian Studies,' 883–93; see also the more recent studies by Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 177–200; Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 401–16; and Verger, 'Isidore de Séville dans les universités médiévales.'
- 3 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 12.
- 4 CPL, no. 1213, and *Index*, no. 136; see also Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 15–16. Ed. Arévalo, *S. Isidori Opera omnia*, I, 27–9, rptd. in PL 81, 30–2; a critical edition is being prepared by José Carlos Martín. For a number of Isidore's works and related texts the only available edition is still the late eighteenth-century one by Arévalo, rptd. in PL 81–3; whenever referring to Arévalo's edition, I will hereafter quote only the PL reprint.
- 5 Braulio's *Renotatio Isidori* is one of the major sources on Isidore's life and works: see below, pp. 3–4. The remains of the epistolary exchange between Braulio and Isidore also offer some precious evidence: see Madoz, *Epistolario de San Braulio*.
- 6 Vega, 'Cuestiones críticas,' 95–6.

- 7 Ferotin, *Le Liber ordinum*, 87–93 and 194–9, and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 33–6. On the role of confession and penance in Isidore's life and works, see Fontaine, 'Pénitence publique et conversion personnelle,' 143–51, and on the penitential content of the *Synonyma*, see below, [chapter 2](#), p. 20.
- 8 Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 124.
- 9 CPL, no. 1206, and *Index*, no. 159. The most recent edition is by José Carlos Martín, *La 'Renotatio librorum domini Isidori' de Braulio de Zaragoza* († 651). *Introducción, edición crítica y traducción* (Fundación San Millán de la Cogolla, 2002); however, I have consulted that by Lynch and Galindo, *San Braulio*, 356–61; rptd. with a French translation in Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 431–5. In Arevalo's edition (rptd. in PL 81, 15–17, and 82, 65–8), this text is introduced with the title *Praenotatio*, which is the most common reading. Here I follow the most recent editor as well as Fontaine and Domínguez del Val, who use *renotatio*.
- 10 'De uiris inlustribus librum unum, cui nos ista subiunximus' [(He wrote) a book (entitled) *De uiris inlustribus*, to which we added these (notes)]: see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 432; cf. CPL, no. 1206.
- 11 Ed. and trans. into Spanish by Codoñer-Merino, *El 'De uiris inlustribus'*; but see Hillgarth's criticisms of Codoñer-Merino's edition in his 'The Position of Isidorian Studies,' 836–7.
- 12 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 433.
- 13 See the fundamental study by Aldama, 'Indicaciones,' esp. 84–7.
- 14 Elfassi, '*Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*,' 202.
- 15 On Ildefonsus, see Hillgarth, 'The Position of Isidorian Studies,' 885.
- 16 Ed. and trans. Codoñer-Merino, *El 'De uiris inlustribus' de Ildefonso*, 128–9.
- 17 Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 17–18.
- 18 CPL, no. 1215, and *Index*, no. 846. Ed. Anspach, *Taionis et*

Isidori, 57–64. On the date and authorship of the *Abbreuiatio*, see PL 81, 27; Anspach, *Taionis et Isidori*, 45–56; and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 16–17.

- 19 Viñayo González, ‘Cuestiones histórico-críticas,’ and idem, ‘La llegada de San Isidoro.’ A contemporary account of the translation of Isidore’s remains to León was compiled by an anonymous cleric and is ptd. in PL 81, 39–43.
- 20 Gaiffier, ‘Le culte de St. Isidore.’
- 21 *CPL*, no. 1214, and *Index*, no.1082; ptd. in PL 82, 19–56. The *Vita S. Isidori* was eventually epitomized in two late Isidorian biographies: one by Rodrigo de Cerrato (s. xiii; *Index*, no. 1360, ptd. in PL 81, 76–81), the other by A. Martínez de Toledo (s. xv; ed. Madoz, *Vidas de San Ildefonso y San Isidoro*, 67–161).
- 22 Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 18–19, and Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 407. However, it has recently been argued that Lucas de Tuy was in fact from León: see Falque Rey, ‘Los manuscritos del “Chronicon mundi.”’ On other Isidorian biographies, see Vega, ‘Cuestiones críticas,’ and Alija Ramos, ‘Un poco de crítica.’
- 23 Cf. *Isidori Historia gothorum*, 243, n. 1, and PL 81, 92–3.
- 24 Madoz, *San Isidoro*, 5.
- 25 The two dates are the *terminus post* and *ante quem* respectively of Leander’s death: see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 113.
- 26 The canons of the two councils are ed. in Martínez Díez, *La colección canónica hispana*, IV, 113–52 and 41–6 respectively; the canons concerning the age of candidates to priesthood and episcopacy are no. xvii of the council of Agde (see *ibid.*, IV, 127–8), and no. i of that of Arles (see *ibid.*, IV, 42).
- 27 See Canon xix in Martínez Díez, *La colección canónica hispana*, V, 206–11; see also Mañaricua, ‘El nombramiento de obispos,’ and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 25–6; on the council of Toledo, see below, p. 10.
- 28 Fontaine has also suggested as *terminus post quem* for Isidore’s birth the year 554: see his ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in

Catholicisme, VI, 154–5.

- 29 Both Ildefonsus and the *Vita S. Isidori* assign to Isidore forty years of service as bishop: see Codoñer-Merino, *El 'De uiris illustribus' de Ildefonso*, 128, and PL 82, 21.
- 30 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 102–5, and Fontaine and Cazier, 'Observations sur l'histoire familiale,' 38–7; see also below, pp. 5–6 and 9–10.
- 31 The only source on the name Turtura is a highly allusive passage in Leander's *De institutione uirginum et contemptu mundi*, xxxi, 9: ed. and trans. by Velázquez, *De la instrucción de las vírgenes*, 173. See also Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 87–92; Fontaine and Cazier, 'Observations sur l'histoire familiale,' 353–69; and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 21–3.
- 32 Severianus must have belonged to a powerful senatorial *gens*, with extensive estates in the southeast of the Iberian peninsula: see Fontaine and Cazier, 'Observations sur l'histoire familiale,' 370–1, 376–80, and 386–7; Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 20; and Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 114–15.
- 33 Isidore records this event in a sombre note in his *Etymologiae* XV, i, 67: 'Nunc autem [Carthago Spartaria] a Gothis subuersa atque in desolationem redacta est' [But now (Carthage) has been turned upside down and reduced to desolation by the Goths]: see Fontaine and Cazier, 'Observations sur l'histoire familiale,' 372–6, and Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 370. When quoting the *Etymologiae* from Lindsay's edition, I will just provide the reference to the relevant book and paragraph: see below, n. 75.
- 34 Diesner, *Isidor von Sevilla*, 9. See also below, p. 9.
- 35 Manitius, *Die lateinische Literatur des Mittelalters*, I, 52.
- 36 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 5–6; for an overview of the scholarship on this question, see Fontaine and Cazier, 'Observations sur l'histoire familiale,' 350–2, and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 24.
- 37 'Observations sur l'histoire familiale,' esp. 385–7.
- 38 Ibid., 398, and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 25. Isidore's

sister may also have been born after the family left Carthage: see Fontaine and Cazier, 'Observations sur l'histoire familiale,' 361–2.

39 See below, pp. 9–11 and 13.

40 The *Laus Spaniae* constitutes the preface to the *Historia gothorum*, one of Isidore's historical works. For the most recent edition and Spanish translation of the *Laus*, see Rodríguez Alonso, *Las Historias de los Godos*, 168–71. Cf. too Mommsen, *Isidori Historia gothorum*, 267; Fontaine, 'Un manifeste politique et culturel,' 61–2; and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 225–7 and 361–3.

41 Ibid., 132–4, and Diesner, *Isidor von Sevilla*, 94–5. To King Sisebut Isidore dedicated *De natura rerum* and also, apparently, the *Etymologiae*: see below, nn. 107–8.

42 Fontaine and Cazier, 'Observations sur l'histoire familiale,' 390–2 and 398–400. Interestingly, Fontaine and Cazier note that Leander and Isidore may have emulated the example of Gregory the Great and his role of mediator between Byzantines and Longobards in Italy; Leander indeed had the chance to befriend Gregory during a diplomatic mission in Byzantium, and Gregory dedicated to him his *Moralia in Iob*: see ibid., 387–92, and Dagens, 'Grégoire le Grand avant son pontificat,' 147–9; see also below, p. 9.

43 See above, n. 42.

44 Also Martin of Braga's patron, namely Martin of Tours, to whom the Cathedral of Braga was dedicated, was likewise a monk as well as a bishop: see Fontaine, 'Fins et moyens,' 166–7.

45 The close interaction between secular and regular clergy had a long tradition in Spain, probably as a means of counteracting the excessive ascetism of the persistent Priscillianist heresy: see ibid., 173–4. This osmosis between *coenobium* and *presbyterium* certainly played a role in Isidore's education: see below, pp. 6–7.

46 According to the *Vita S. Isidori*, Leander proved to be a rather severe teacher: 'Non parcebat uirgae' [he was not sparing the rod]: see PL 82, 22; cf. Manitius, *Die lateinische Literatur des*

Mittelalters, I, 52–3. Fontaine and Domínguez del Val, by contrast, sketch the relationship between the two brothers as a very affectionate one: see Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 7, and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 26.

47 Fontaine, ‘Isidoro di Siviglia e la cultura del suo tempo,’ 13–14.

48 Pérez Llamazares, ‘¿San Isidoro, monje?’, and Madoz, *San Isidoro*, 10; see also Diesner, *Isidor von Sevilla*, 16.

49 Ed. and trans. into Spanish by Campos Ruiz, *Reglas monástica*, 79–125. According to Aldama, the *Regula* was composed between 615 and 618: see his ‘Indicaciones sobre la cronología,’ 66–7 and 88; cf. Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 437. On the *Regula*, see *ibid.*, 208–11 and 354–5; Fontaine, ‘Théorie et pratique,’ 86–7 and 93–5; and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 406–8.

50 Our main source is again Leander’s *De institutione uirginum et contemptu mundi*, xxxi, 11: see Velázquez, *De la instrucción de las vírgenes*, 174.

51 Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 30.

52 Fontaine, ‘La vocation monastique,’ 353–4, esp. n. 3. Cf. above n. 45.

53 That Isidore attended a school attached to the cathedral of Seville is endorsed by those who object to the traditional view of the young Isidore as a monk: see Pérez Llamazares, ‘¿San Isidoro, monje?’, 45, and Madoz, *San Isidoro*, 7.

54 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 92–3, and *idem*, ‘Fins et moyens,’ 200–1.

55 *Ibid.*, 161–5.

56 *Ibid.*, 173.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*, 171.

59 Fontaine, ‘La vocation monastique,’ 353–4, and *idem*, ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, VII. 2, 2106. On the many facets and different components of Isidore’s culture and personality and on their reflection in the

Synonyma, see below, [chapter 2](#), pp. 20–32.

60 Fontaine, ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in *Catholicisme* VI, 155.

61 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 7.

62 In *De ecclesiasticis officiis* II, xi, 4, Isidore warns against the frequent mistakes in pronouncing Latin and recommends a proper training in Latin elocution: see Lawson, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, 70–1; on *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, see below, n. 126. Also, in *Etymologiae* IX, i, 7, Isidore laments the corruption of Latin by solecisms and barbarisms: see Reydellet, *Étymologies: Livre IX*, 37. However, Isidore’s main concern is textual language, not spoken Latin, writing not speech: see Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, 218 and 224–5.

63 For a bibliography of the scholarly debate on this regard up to 1975, see Hillgarth, ‘The Position of Isidorian Studies,’ 845–53.

64 Isidore is likely to have known first-hand Cicero, Quintilian, Virgil, Lucretius, and Martial, or at least part of their works; he might also have had some direct knowledge of Ovid and Sallust: see Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 742–62; see also Hillgarth, ‘The Position of Isidorian Studies,’ 848–53. On Isidore’s knowledge of Greek authors, see below, pp. 8–9.

65 They constitute what Fontaine has called Isidore’s ‘bibliothèque introuvable’: see his ‘Fins et moyens,’ 186; idem, ‘Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,’ 15; and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 332–5. On the specific problems and methods of *Quellenforschung* in Isidorian studies, see Fontaine, ‘Problèmes de methode.’

66 A library within the *domus episcopi* of Seville dates from s. iii^{ex}–ivⁱⁿ: see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 93–4.

67 CPL, no. 1212, and *Index*, no. 123. Ed. Sánchez Martín, *Isidori Versus*, 210–27. On the debated authorship of the *Versus in bibliotheca*, see Manitius, *Die lateinische Literatur des Mittelalters*, I, 69–70; Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 741; and idem, ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, VII. 2, 2106.

- 68 Sánchez Martín, ‘Echos de poetas tardíos en los “Versus.”’
- 69 According to Fontaine, the fresco and the distichs in particular may well have been inspired by some prestigious Roman libraries: see his *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 739–41, and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 94–5.
- 70 Other authors mentioned in the distichs are Cyprian of Carthage, on whom see below, [chapter 2](#), pp. 20–1; the Christian historians Orosius and Eusebius; and the jurists Theodosius, Paul, and Gaius.
- 71 Sánchez Martín, *Isidori Versus*, 213.
- 72 Ibid., 223. Cf. Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 741. On Horace, see below, [chapter 5](#), n. 67.
- 73 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 792; see also Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, 217 and 219.
- 74 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 785–806, and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 180–1 and 329–43, esp. 337–42.
- 75 Isidore’s encyclopaedia has been alternatively attributed the title of *Etymologiae* or *Origines*: see Codoñer-Merino, ‘¿*Origines* o *Etymologiae*?’, 511; Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, III, 1024 (addenda to I, 11, n. 1); and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 175 and 285. The current complete edition of the work is that by Lindsay, *Isidori Etymologiae*. This edition, however, is not to be considered definitive, as Lindsay admitted himself: see his *Isidori Etymologiae*, I, v–vi; cf. Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 112, n. 1. The recent bilingual edition by Oroz Reta and Marcos Casquero follows Lindsay’s text, but a number of readings have been emended: see Oroz Reta and Marcos Casquero, *Etimologías. Edición bilingüe*, 258, and idem, ‘Las *Etimologías* de San Isidoro’; see also the annotated bibliography by Hillgarth, ‘The Position of Isidorian Studies,’ 825–9. Lindsay did not produce a stemma, but divided the manuscripts examined into three families: see his *Isidori Etymologiae*, I, vii–xi; see also the studies by Porzig, ‘Die Rezensionen der *Etymologiae*’; Marshall, ‘Isidore,’ 195–6; and Reydellet, ‘Compte rendu du colloque isidorien,’ 283–4. The first stemma of the *Etymologiae* was attempted by Reydellet, ‘La diffusion des Origines,’ 437; an updated and

expanded version of it is in Gorman, 'The Diagrams,' 543. A project for a critical edition of the whole work is in progress under Fontaine's supervision, and six books have so far been edited: see Marshall, *Etymologies: Book II*; Reydellet, *Étymologies: Livre IX*; André, *Étymologies: Livre XII*; Gasparotto, *Etimologie: Libro XIII*; André, *Étymologies: Livre XVII*; finally, Rodríguez-Pantoja, *Etimologías: Libro XIX*. In addition, an edition with Spanish translation of Book XX was published in 1975 by Balóira Bértolo, *El libro XX de las Etimologías*, and a partial edition with Spanish translation of Book XVI was published in 1970 by Díaz y Díaz, *Los capítulos sobre los metales*. For a very recent complete English translation of the *Etymologiae*, see Barney et al., *The Etymologies*. On the manuscript tradition and transmission of the *Etymologiae*, see below, n. 130, and [chapter 3](#), pp. 58–62. For a survey of the contents and structure of the *Etymologiae*, see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 176–9.

[76](#) Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 796–8.

[77](#) Fontaine, 'Isidore et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique,' 48–50.

[78](#) Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, 210; see also Fontaine, 'Isidorus Varro christianus?'

[79](#) Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, 234; Fontaine, 'Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,' 22–7; idem, 'Isidore et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique,' 43 and 47–8; and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 174. Augustine is one of Isidore's most admired *auctoritates*; six full lines of the *Versus in bibliotheca* are dedicated to him, concluding: 'Si Augustinus adest sufficit ipse tibi' [If there is Augustine, he will suffice to you]: see Sánchez Martín, *Isidori Versus*, 219; cf. Fontaine, 'Théorie et pratique,' 66, n. 4. On Augustine as a possible source of the *Synonyma*, see below, [chapter 2](#), pp. 16–18, 24, and 30.

[80](#) Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 787.

[81](#) See the introduction to Isidore's cosmological treatise *De natura rerum*: Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 167; cf. idem, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 797.

82 See above, pp. 7–8.

83 Fontaine, ‘Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,’ 17–22. On the coexistence of Christian and secular elements in Isidore’s culture, see idem, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 785–806, esp. 792–8.

84 Ibid., I, 10–12, and Fontaine, ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in *Catholicisme*, VI, 156–7. According to Fontaine, Isidore was a true shepherd in the very sense defined by Gregory in his *Regula pastoralis*: see idem, ‘Pénitence publique et conversion personnelle,’ 154.

85 See Sánchez Martín, *Isidori Versus*, 215 and 221. To John Chrysostom Isidore also devotes [chapter 6](#) of his *De uiris illustribus*: see Codoñer-Merino, *El ‘De uiris illustribus’*, 137–8. Cf. Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 756–7 and 849.

86 Ibid., II, 757–9.

87 Ibid., II, 849 and 852–4. Isidore’s knowledge of Greek, however, is a vexed question: for a recent overview of the scholarly debate, see Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 27–30. See also Vaccari, ‘Una fonte,’ 172, and Lawson, ‘The Sources.’ In the *Etymologiae* Isidore often turns to Greek words to explain Latin ones, but sometimes with awkward results: see Manitius, *Die lateinische Literatur des Mittelalters*, I, 65.

88 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 853–4.

89 Ibid., II, 854–9; Fontaine, ‘Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,’ 18–19 and 31–2; Fontaine, ‘Fins et moyens,’ 165–6; idem, ‘Isidore et la mutation de l’encyclopédisme antique,’ 53–4; finally, idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 22, 33–4, 42–4, and 58. On the decisive influence on Isidore of African authors, such as Augustine, in particular, and also Cyprian, see above, p. 8, and below, [chapter 2](#), pp. 16–18, 20–1, and 30.

90 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 850, n.1; but cf. Díaz y Díaz, ‘La cultura de la España visigótica,’ 52–3.

91 See ‘Dreikapitelstreit,’ in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, III, 368–9; ‘Three Chapters,’ in *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, XIV, 144–5; finally, see the extensive entry ‘Trois-chapitres,’ in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, XV. 2, 1868–924.

- 92 See below, pp. 9–10.
- 93 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 850–1; idem, ‘Fins et moyens,’ 158; and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 373–4.
- 94 PL 82, 23–4.
- 95 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 113–14.
- 96 Ed. Cazier, *Sententiae*. See also the vast introductory study by Robles, ‘Isidoro y la cultura ecclesiastica’; Fontaine, ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, VII. 2, 2017; and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 235–50; for Isidore’s rhetorical theory of the *sententiae*, see idem, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 303–9. On the sources of the *Sententiae*, especially Gregory’s *Moralia*, see Cazier, *Sententiae*, x–xiii and liv–lx, and Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 236–7.
- 97 On the sources of the *Synonyma* in general, and on the use made of the *Moralia* in *Iob* in particular, see below, [chapter 2](#), pp. 20–2, esp. p. 20.
- 98 Mommsen, *Isidori Historia gothorum*, 287–8.
- 99 PL 82, 29.
- 100 Fontaine, ‘Conversion et culture,’ 102–3.
- 101 For this brief summary of those momentous events, I am indebted to Fontaine, ‘Conversion et culture’; idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 103–5; and Diesner, *Isidor von Sevilla*, 9–18.
- 102 See above, n. 25.
- 103 Orlandis, ‘Le royaume wisigothique et son unité religieuse.’ The political and religious unification of Spain within the Visigothic kingdom would later be considered as the founding act of the Spanish nation: see Rucquoi, ‘Les Wisigoths fondement de la “nation Espagne.”’
- 104 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 123–6 and 138–41, and Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 41–9 and 53–84.
- 105 Vives, *Concilios visigóticos*, 163–85. See also Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 124–6 and 373–4.
- 106 See above, p. 6. On Sisebut’s flamboyant style, see below, [chapter 2](#), p. 27.
- 107 Ed. Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*. This treatise also circulated

with the title *Liber rotarum* because of the six circular diagrams (*rotae*) which are included in the text: see *ibid.*, 15–18, and the two recent dedicated studies by Gorman, ‘The Diagrams,’ with an expanded and updated version of Fontaine’s stemma at 541; and Eastwood, ‘The Diagram of the Four Elements.’ For the diffusion of Isidore’s treatise in the British Isles, see below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 55–8. Sisebut, in turn, replied with a letter addressed to Isidore, in which the king discussed cosmological questions: ed. Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 328–35; see also Fontaine’s discussion of the king’s letter at 151–62; and Gasparotto, ‘La *Epistula* di Sisebut,’ 61–7.

- 108 The brief dedicatory letter to Sisebut has been dated to 620 and is edited in Madoz, *Epistolario de San Braulio*, 88. There are quite a number of manuscripts where the dedicatory letter by Isidore is addressed not to King Sisebut but to Braulio. There are also instances in which the letter is addressed to both Sisebut *and* Braulio, or in which both names are omitted: see Anspach, *Taionis et Isidori*, 37–9. The *Etymologiae* may well have been dedicated to both Sisebut and Braulio in different stages of the work’s composition: see Lindsay, ‘The Editing of Isidore’s *Etymologiae*,’ 51; Lynch, *Saint Braulio*, 42; and Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 173.
- 109 Martínez Díez, *La colección canónica hispana*, V, 161–274. On Isidore’s liturgical interests and works, see Séjourné, ‘Isidore et la liturgie wisigothique.’ A number of scholars have attempted to ascribe some liturgical compositions to Isidore: see Pérez de Urbel, ‘Los himnos isidorianos’; Brou, ‘Problèmes liturgiques,’ esp. 204–5; and Sims-Williams, ‘Oratio Sancti Isidori pro omnibus christianis.’ Isidore might also have composed some sacred music: see below, [chapter 2](#), p. 29 and nn. 113 and 115.
- 110 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 374–5.
- 111 Ed. Martínez Díez, *La colección canónica hispana*. The *Hispana* has been ascribed to Isidore and is therefore also known as *Isidoriana*: on the area of origin and authorship of this *Collectio*, see Madoz, *San Isidoro*, 89–117; Díaz y Díaz, ‘Pequeñas aportaciones,’ esp. 386–90; Martínez Díez, *La colección canónica hispana*, I, 306–25; finally, Fontaine,

‘Pénitence publique et conversion personnelle,’ 153, and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 141–2. These scholars all believe that Isidore must have played a role in the composition of the *Collectio*; but cf. A. Bride, ‘Hispana ou Isidoriana Collectio,’ in *Catholicisme*, V, 766–7.

- 112 See Davies, ‘Isidorian Texts,’ esp. 207–8; see also Hillgarth, ‘The Position of Isidorian Studies,’ 884; Le Bras, ‘Sur la part d’Isidore’; and below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 46–7.
- 113 A complete list of Isidorian works, including those of dubious and certainly spurious authorship, is given in both *CPL*, nos. 1186–229, and *Index*, nos. 101–34; the latter also provides a list of the surviving manuscripts of each work dating up to the twelfth century. For a general introduction to all Isidorian texts, including the dubious and spurious ones, see Domínguez del Val, *San Isidoro*, 87–176. As to the writings spuriously ascribed to Isidore, see the extensive monograph by Fuhrmann, *Die pseudoisidorischen Fälschungen*, and its précis by G. Fransen, ‘Isidoriens (Faux),’ in *Dictionnaire d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, XXIV, 219–24; see also *CPPMA* IB, nos. 803–11; IIA, nos. 286–96 and 596–615; IIB, nos. 772–81 and 862–3; Robles Carcedo, *Prolegómenos*; and Hillgarth, ‘The Position of Isidorian Studies,’ 839–45. With particular regard to the Isidorian pseudepigrapha of Irish origin, see McNally, ‘Isidorian Pseudepigrapha,’ and idem, ‘Isidoriana’; see also below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 40–1.
- 114 See above, pp. 7–8, and below, pp. 13–14; see also Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, 241–3.
- 115 Isidore defined them in his *Etymologiae* I, xxviii–xxxi: see below, pp. 11–14 and nn. 122 and 124. For an exhaustive discussion of the four categories, see Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 38–48.
- 116 Elorduy, ‘Unidad orgánica,’ esp. 293–5. See also Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 27–56, and II, 869–71. Significantly, the very first book of the *Etymologiae* is devoted to the *ars grammatica*, which is there presented as the mother of all sciences, the *origo* and the foundation of all liberal arts: ‘Grammatica est scientia recte loquendi, et origo et fundamentum liberalium litterarum’ [Grammar is the science of correct speech, as well as the origin and foundation of

liberal letters]: see *Etymologiae* I, v, 1. Such a definition is derived from Cassiodorus, *Institutiones* II, i, 1: cf. Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 286, and Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, 211–41.

117 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 39.

118 *Etymologiae* I, xxxi.

119 Marshall, *Etymologies: Book II*, 110–13 (translation adapted from Marshall). Cf. Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 39–40.

120 *Etymologiae* I, xxxviii, 1.

121 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 44–5.

122 See *Etymologiae* I, xxx, 1: ‘Glossa Graeca interpretatione linguae sortitur nomen. Hanc philosophi aduerbium dicunt, quia uocem illam, de cuius requiritur, uno et singulari uerbo designat.’ [*Glossa* derives its name from the Greek equivalent of *lingua*. Philosophers call it *aduerbium* because it designates a given term in question by means of one word.]

123 See *Etymologiae* II, xxxi, 6: ‘Synonymia est, quotiens in conexa oratione pluribus uerbis unam rem significamus’ [*Synonymia* ... occurs when in one context we use several words to signify the same thing]: Marshall, *Etymologies: Book II*, 78–9 (Marshall’s translation). See also Pérez Castro, ‘La *synonymia* y la sinonimia,’ 58–62.

124 See *Etymologiae* I, xxix, 1: ‘Etymologia est origo uoculorum, cum uis uerbi uel nominis per interpretationem colligitur’ [*Etymologia* is the origin of words, when the meaning of a verb or noun is deduced through interpretation]. See also Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 871–3; idem, ‘Isidore et la mutation de l’encyclopédisme antique,’ 55–7; idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 283–96; Engels, ‘La portée de l’etymologie isidorienne.’ On etymology as a medieval category of thought, see at least Amsler, *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse*, esp. 167–72 and 207–50; Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 495–500; Klinck, *Die lateinische Etymologie*, esp. 138–84; Michel, ‘Etymologie als mittelalterliche Linguistik’; Ilona Opelt, ‘Etymologie,’ in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, VI, 797–844. Finally, for an outline of etymology from

antiquity to romanticism, see Roland Bernecker, 'Etymologie,' in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, II, 1543–56.

- 125 Fontaine, 'Isidore et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique,' 51–4, and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 337 and 342; see also above, pp. 7–8, and below, pp. 13–14. In his *Renotatio* Braulio presents the *Etymologiae* as a text instructing in the *diuinarum humanarumque scientia*: see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 432.
- 126 The etymological perspective underlies not only the *Etymologiae*, but also at least two other Isidorian works, namely *De ecclesiasticis officiis* and the *Historia gothorum*, the original titles of which, as their modern editors have pointed out, actually read *De origine ecclesiasticorum officiorum* and *De origine gothorum* respectively: see Fontaine, 'Pénitence publique et conversion personnelle,' 143; idem, 'Aux sources de la lexicographie médiévale,' 103; and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 293. On the *Historia gothorum*, see above n. 40. *De ecclesiasticis officiis* is ed. Lawson, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*; for a unfavourable review of Lawson's edition, see Gorman, 'The Diagrams,' 537; Gorman redraws Lawson's stemma, *ibid.*, 545. For an overview of the contents of *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 200–6.
- 127 Fontaine, 'Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,' 35.
- 128 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 175–6.
- 129 Fontaine, 'Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,' 35–7; idem, 'Isidore et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique,' 50–1; and idem, *Genèse et originalité*, 335–6.
- 130 On the diffusion and manuscript tradition of the *Etymologiae*, see *Index*, no. 122; Fernández Catón, *Las Etimologías en la tradición manuscrita medieval*; Reydellet, 'La diffusion des *Origines*'; idem, 'Compte rendu du colloque isidorien,' 283–5, including the first map of the diffusion of the Isidorian encyclopaedia; Balóira Bértolo, 'Estudio crítico de la transmisión manuscrita en las "Etimologías."' On the fortune of Isidore's encyclopaedia, see Fontaine, 'Isidore et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique,' 57–62; see also below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 38–54 and 58–62.

- 131 Fontaine, 'Isidorus Varro christianus?', esp. 104–5, and above, p. 8; see also idem, 'Isidore et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique,' 43–5, and idem, 'Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,' 15.
- 132 See *Etymologiae* VI, vii, 1. The link between Isidore and Varro was first indirectly established by Braulio in his *Renotatio*, who applied to Isidore the praise that Cicero had lavished on Varro: see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 433, and idem, 'Isidorus Varro christianus?', 89, esp. n. 2. Apparently Cicero's passage was mediated to Braulio by Augustine's *De ciuitate Dei*, VI, 2: see *ibid.*, 89–90 and 100–4.
- 133 CPL, no. 1202. Ptd. in PL 83, 69–98; a new critical edition is by Maria Adelaida Andrés Sanz, *Isidori hispalensis episcopi De differentiis liber. II: Estudio, edición crítica, traducción y notas* (unpubl. PhD diss., University of Salamanca, 1996), which is scheduled for publication in the series 'Auteurs latins du Moyen Âge'; see also Brugnoli, 'Il Liber de differentiis rerum.'
- 134 Extracts from *De differentiis rerum* were inserted unaltered into the *Etymologiae*, especially Books II, VII, and XI: see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 169–70 and 290; see also Codoñer Merino, 'Differentia y etymologia,' 19–20 and 27–8.
- 135 See *De differentiis rerum*, iii, 8: 'Pater ex nullo exordium ducit, Filius ex Patre originem sumit, Spiritus uere sanctus ex Patre Filioque procedit' [The Father does not derive (His) beginning from anything, the Son receives (His) origin from the Father, the Holy Ghost indeed proceeds from the Father and the Son]; vii, 18: 'Pater principium ex eo quod rerum omnium origo et causa sit' [The Father (is) the beginning from which the origin and cause of all things derives]; and xi, 28: 'Totius enim creaturae origo simul exstitit, species tamen et forma per temporum incrementa proceserunt' [Indeed the origin of all creatures existed at the same time, but their species and nature developed with the progress of time]: PL 83, 71 and 73–4 (my emphasis). See also Fontaine, 'Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,' 54–5.
- 136 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 290.
- 137 Fontaine, 'Isidore et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique,' 56–7.

- 138 Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*, 220–23, quotation at 223.
- 139 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 167, and idem, ‘Isidor von Sevilla,’ in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, V, 677–8.
- 140 Under this title are designated what in fact are two distinct texts, *De differentiis uerborum* (CPL, no. 1187; ed. and trans. into Spanish CodoñerMerino, *De differentiis*. I) and *De differentiis rerum* (see above, n. 133). A third book of *differentiae* has circulated within the Isidorian corpus from the Carolingian age under the title of *De proprietate sermonum uel rerum*, but it is of dubious authorship: CPL, no. 1226, and *Index*, no. 134; ed. Uhlfelder, *De proprietate sermonum uel rerum*. On these three books of *differentiae*, see Andrés Sanz, ‘Relación y transmisión manuscrita.’
- 141 On the *Synonyma*, see below, [chapter 2](#).
- 142 On the *Etymologiae*, see above, esp. nn. 75, 108, and 130.
- 143 See Fontaine, ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in *Catholicisme*, VI, 157, and Aldama, ‘Indicaciones,’ 77.
- 144 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 46–7.
- 145 Fontaine, ‘Isidore et la mutation de l’encyclopédisme antique,’ 54; see also above, n. 134.
- 146 See above, pp. 11–12.
- 147 See below, [chapter 2](#), pp. 18–19.

2. The *Synonyma*: Their Structure, Style, and Sources

- 1 This is the full title provided in both CPL, no. 1203, and CPPMA IIB, no. 3425, as well as in Arévalo’s edition, *Isidori Opera omnia*, VI, 472–523; rptd. in PL 83, 825–68. A new critical edition of the *Synonyma* has recently been completed by Jacques Elfassi, ‘Les *Synonyma* d’Isidore de Séville: édition critique et histoire du texte’ (unpubl. PhD diss., Paris, EPHE–IV^e Section, 2001), which is scheduled for publication in CCSL. The long-awaited edition by Antonio Peris has never appeared, though he published two preliminary studies in 1973: ‘Observaciones sintácticas,’ and ‘Particularidades

estilísticas.’ Fontaine had also announced the preparation of a critical edition of the *Synonyma*, but this has not appeared to this day: see his ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, VII. 2, 2115. See also the detailed linguistic study by Elfassi, ‘La langue des *Synonyma*.’

- 2 See PL 81, 461–4, and PL 83, 825–6, n. 1.
- 3 On the association between Isidore’s *Synonyma* and Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, see below, pp. 17–18 and 24; see also below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 49 and 70; [chapter 5](#), p. 143; and [chapter 6](#), p. 170.
- 4 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 432.
- 5 Codoñer-Merino, *El ‘De uiris illustribus’ de Ildefonso*, 128.
- 6 Ed. Madoz, *Epistolario de San Braulio*, 71–2.
- 7 PL 83, 827–8; on the *schedula*, see below, pp. 22–3.
- 8 CPL, no. 1203; ptd. in PL 83, 827–8. Elfassi has suggested, though hypothetically, that the *Prologus prior* is connected with one of the two recensions he has identified, that is L, while the *Prologus alter* is characteristic of recension F: see his ‘*Synonyma*,’ 222, and below, nn. 10–11. However, in a personal communication, he has admitted that prologues, because of their position at the beginning of a text, are particularly subject to contamination, suppression, or addition: see also Di Sciacca, ‘The Manuscript Tradition,’ n. 81 at 107.
- 9 See above, n. 1.
- 10 See Elfassi, ‘Una edición crítica,’ 110–13. The existence of two or more recensions is by no means an exception within Isidore’s production: see the volume *La edición crítica de las obras de Isidoro de Sevilla. El problema de las recensiones múltiples*, ed. Maria A. Andrés Sanz, Jacques Elfassi, and José C. Martín (Madrid, forthcoming).
- 11 Elfassi, ‘*Synonyma*,’ 222, and idem, ‘Trois aspects inattendus,’ 110–11.
- 12 See above, n. 8 and below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 49, 68–9 and 74.
- 13 Fontaine, ‘Isidore auteur “ascétique,”’ 171; the following

description of the content and structure of the two books is especially indebted to *ibid.*, 172–3.

- 14 In *De ecclesiasticis officiis* and in the third book of the *Sententiae* too Isidore drew a thorough and detailed ethical code for various social groups, particularly the prominent ones, which shows how conscious Isidore was of his own duties and tasks not only as a spiritual leader, but also, more generally, as a moral and cultural guide of the young Hispano-Visigothic society: see above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 9–11.
- 15 On this praise of Reason, see below, pp. 31–2.
- 16 The most recent Spanish translator of the *Synonyma*, Viñayo González, presents the text in a dialogical structure and argues that the Isidorian text could be seen as the earliest example of Christian drama: see his *Sinónimos*, 31; see also below, p. 18.
- 17 See above, p. 16, and below, n. 85; see also [chapter 3](#), pp. 49 and 70. The *Synonyma* were often misattributed to Augustine, and in at least a manuscript witness of the *Synonyma*, Windsheim, Stadtbibliothek 3, the opening rubric reads: ‘Incipit liber soliloquiorum Augustini’: see Elfassi, ‘Trois aspects inattendus,’ 146–7 and 151; see also Fontaine, ‘Isidore auteur “ascétique,”’ 169, n. 20.
- 18 See above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 7–8.
- 19 *Etymologiae* II, xxi, 47: ‘Peusis, id est soliloquium cum ad interrogata ipsi nobis respondemus’ [*Peusis* ... is soliloquy, when we ask questions and answer them ourselves]: see Marshall, *Etymologies Book II*, 96–7 (Marshall’s translation).
- 20 Pellegrino, ‘Le “Confessionni,”’ 253 and 269. On the relationship between the *Synonyma* and another prestigious antecedent of the medieval genre of inner dialogue, namely Boethius’s *De consolazione philosophiae*, see Fontaine, ‘Isidore auteur “ascétique,”’ 170, and below, [chapter 5](#), p. 143.
- 21 Fontaine, ‘Isidore auteur “ascétique,”’ 169–70.
- 22 Di Sciacca, ‘The Manuscript Tradition,’ 112–13; see also below, [chapter 5](#), p. 110.
- 23 Fontaine, ‘Isidore auteur “ascétique,”’ 170–1, esp. n. 23.

- 24 'Pénitence publique et conversion personnelle,' 151–2. I count five explicit quotations from the Psalms in the *Synonyma*: see below, pp. 21–2.
- 25 See below, pp. 20–2. The same pervasive influence of the Psalms can be detected in Isidore's main source, Gregory's *Moralia*: see Fontaine, 'Augustine, Grégoire et Isidore,' 504–5, and idem, 'Les trois voies,' 13–14 and 16–17.
- 26 'Indicaciones,' 65–7; see also Madoz, *Epistolario de San Braulio*, 42–3; but cf. Lynch, *Saint Braulio*, 35–7, where it is argued that a dating around 620 seems more likely.
- 27 Elfassi, '*Synonyma*,' 219.
- 28 Ibid., and Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 188, n. 56. On the importance of the *Moralia* as an Isidorian source in general, see Fontaine, 'Augustine, Grégoire et Isidore,' 499–500, and below, p. 20; see also above, [chapter 1](#), p. 9.
- 29 'Misimus uobis Synonymarum [sic] libellum, non pro id quod alicuius utilitatis sit, sed quia eum uolueras' [We have sent you the booklet of the *Synonyma*, not because it may be of any use, but because you had requested it]: see Madoz, *Epistolario de San Braulio*, 72; see also Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 167–8 and 193–4, and above, p. 16.
- 30 See Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 190–1, esp. n. 61. On the two books of *differentiae* and the four grammatical categories, see above, [chapter 1](#), nn. 133 and 140, and pp. 11–14.
- 31 See below, pp. 20 and 22.
- 32 The *Sententiae* are one of the latest works by Isidore: see Cazier, *Sententiae*, xiv–xix, and idem, 'Derrière l'impersonnalité des *Sentences*,' 9.
- 33 Just as *De differentiis rerum* can be considered as a preliminary sketch of the *Etymologiae*, so can the *Synonyma* be regarded in respect to the *Sententiae*: see Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 192–3, and idem, 'Isidore de Séville,' in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, VII. 2, 2108; see also above, [chapter 1](#), p. 14.
- 34 See below, pp. 31–2.

- 35 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 193.
- 36 Ibid., 176, n. 29.
- 37 Ibid., 164–5, esp. n. 6.
- 38 CPL, no. 1203.
- 39 *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, 257 and 261. More recently another Spanish scholar, De Pablo Maroto, has stressed the mystical dimension of the *Synonyma*: see his *Espiridualidad de la Alta Edad Media*, 131.
- 40 *San Isidoro*, 48–51. On the *Regula monachorum*, see above, [chapter 1](#), n. 49.
- 41 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 173.
- 42 Ibid., 182, and below, p. 21.
- 43 'Isidore de Séville,' in *Catholicisme*, VI, 161.
- 44 The following survey is especially indebted to Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 173–84.
- 45 See above, p. 18.
- 46 Jeremiah also seems to have suggested the structural development of the *lamentum* in Book I of the *Synonyma*: see Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 174, n. 25.
- 47 See above, [chapter 1](#), p. 9.
- 48 The sixteen passages in question are IV, xiv, 26, 5; IV, xvi, 29, 3; V, ix, 15, 11; V, xxxix, 70, 9; VIII, xix, 35, 27–8; VIII, xxi, 37, 25; IX, lv, 84, 37; IX, lv, 84, 42; X, vii, 12, 38; XI, xvii, 26, 25–6; XIV, xxix, 34, 48; XVI, xx, 25, 8; XX, xxxiv, 66, 32; XX, xxxvi, 71, 59–60; XXIX, xv, 27, 3; finally, XXX, ix, 33, 138: see Adriaen, *Moralia*, I, 181, 182, 228, 270, 407, 408, 514, 515, and 545; II, 601, 719, 813, 1053, and 1055; III, 1452 and 1514.
- 49 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 175–6. Like the phrase *lamentum paenitentiae* exemplifying the content of Book I of the *Synonyma*, also the phrase *regula uiuendi*, echoing the *norma uiuendi* of *Synonyma* II, 100, occurs in Gregory's *Moralia*, XXVIII, xi, 26, 3: see Adriaen, *Moralia*, III, 1415.
- 50 The textual parallels with and borrowings from the *Moralia*

are especially concentrated in Books VII to XXXII of Gregory's text: see Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 191.

- 51 The *stilus ysydorianus* is synonymous with *sermo commaticus*, on which see di Capua, 'Lo stile commatico,' esp. 213; on the *comma*, see below, n. 86.
- 52 Fontaine, 'Augustine, Grégoire et Isidore,' 503–6; see also below, pp. 24–7.
- 53 See below, pp. 31–2.
- 54 PL 83, 852–3. The source for the first part of this paragraph is Cyprian's *De bono patientiae*, vii, in Moreschini, *De bono patientiae*, in Simonetti and Moreschini, *Cypriani Opera*, 122.
- 55 Cupiccia, 'Clausole quantitative e clausole ritmiche,' 53; see also below, pp. 24–7.
- 56 Sánchez Martín, *Isidori Versus*, 221. According to Fontaine, Cyprian was the Christian Cicero: see his *La littérature latine chrétienne*, 24.
- 57 Ed. Simonetti, *Ad Donatum*, in Simonetti and Moreschini, *Cypriani Opera*, 1–13.
- 58 Fontaine, *La littérature latine chrétienne*, 31.
- 59 PL 83, 827–31, especially 829–30.
- 60 Cf. *Ad Donatum*, x, in Simonetti, *Ad Donatum*, in Simonetti and Moreschini, *Cypriani Opera*, 9.
- 61 Cf. *Ad Donatum*, xi–xiii, *ibid.*, 9–11.
- 62 On the relationship between Africa and Visigothic Spain, see above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 8–9.
- 63 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 191.
- 64 The PL edition presents some minor mistakes in the location of these scriptural passages, but their attribution is on the whole correct.
- 65 See *Synonyma* I, 69 (PL 83, 843, where Christ is hinted at through a triple paraphrase as *custos hominum*, *redemptor animarum*, and *pastor*); II, 3 (PL 83, 845); II, 33 (PL 83, 852–3); II, 94 (PL 83, 866); on *Synonyma* II, 33, see above, p. 21.

- 66 In contrast, Isidore's spirituality has been defined as 'closed,' that is, clogged with precepts and interdictions: see Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 181.
- 67 See below, pp. 31–2.
- 68 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 185–6.
- 69 See above, p. 16.
- 70 PL 83, 827–8.
- 71 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 819, n. 3; cf. idem, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 166, n. 11, and idem, 'Théorie et pratique,' 74.
- 72 PL 81, 462–3.
- 73 PL 81, 359–62.
- 74 For an introductory study of this kind of collections, see Brugnoli, *Studi sulle 'Differentiae uerborum,'* 27–37. To my knowledge, only four of these compilations have been edited, namely the collection *Abditum, opertum*, ed. twice by Mahne in his *Synonyma ad Lucium Veturium secundum editiones romanas*, and *Synonyma ad Lucium Veturium secundum editionem parisinam*; *Amor, ardor*, ed. within Book V of Carisius's *Ars grammatica* in Barwick, *Charisii Ars grammatica*, 412–49; *Arba, humus*, ed. Gatti, *Synonyma Ciceronis* ('*Arba, humus*'); finally, *Accusat, lacescit*, ed. idem, *La raccolta 'Accusat, lacescit.'*
- 75 Gatti, *La raccolta 'Accusat, lacescit,'* 8–9; Gatti himself considers the attribution of these collections to Cicero 'fanciful': ibid. See also PL 81, 360–1.
- 76 *Ciceronis Opera omnia*, XI, 71–5, esp. 71. Cf. PL 81, 463.
- 77 See below, [chapter 5](#), p. 143. Cf. also Rigg, 'Hoccleve's *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville,' 573, n. 24.
- 78 Brugnoli, 'I "Synonyma Ciceronis."'
- 79 See below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 39–40, and [chapter 5](#), pp. 140–1.
- 80 Such a vast diffusion is attested by the great number of collections of synonyms transmitted under the title of *Synonyma Ciceronis*, and by the number of manuscripts

containing them. In the British Isles, the presence of these compilations is attested by at least one manuscript, namely Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barlow 35, fols. 56r–57r: see *Catalogue*, no. 298; and *Handlist*, no. 541; see also Liebermann, ‘Aus Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar,’ 414, and Gneuss, ‘The Study of Language,’ 27.

81 Fontaine, ‘Isidore auteur “ascétique,”’ 166, and idem, ‘Théorie et pratique,’ 74.

82 PL 83, 827–8.

83 Ed. and trans. into English Lawler, *The ‘Parisiana poetria.’*

84 *Parisiana poetria*, v, 451–4, in Lawler, *The ‘Parisiana poetria,’* 106–7 (translation by Lawler).

85 ‘[Stilus ysydorianus], quo utitur Augustinus in libro Soliloquiorum’ [(*Stilus ysydorianus*), of which Augustine makes use in (his) book of *Soliloquia*]: *Parisiana poetria*, v, 450–1, *ibid.*, 106; see also above, pp. 16–18, and n. 3.

86 According to Isidore’s own definition of *colon* and *comma* in *Etymologiae* I, xx, the latter is the smallest portion of the complete thought (*periodus*), that is, a phrase or a short clause; while the *colon* is a major division of the *periodus*, that is, a sentence or group of clauses. Each of these units, *comma*, *colon*, and *periodus*, is marked by a different punctuation mark (*positura* or *distinctio*): see Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Punctuation,’ in *BEASE*, 381–2, esp. 381, and Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, 15–16, 21–2, 302–4. Augustine too discussed *cola* and *commata* in his *De doctrina christiana*, IV, vii, 11–13: see Martin, *Augustini De doctrina christiana*, 123–6.

87 Cf. Polheim, *Die lateinische Reimprosa*, 296 and 299.

88 *Ibid.*, 297.

89 See Orchard, *A Critical Companion to ‘Beowulf,’* 57–8 and 90–2.

90 Polheim defines them *Est-Tiraden*: see his *Die lateinische Reimprosa*, 297.

91 Fontaine, ‘Les trois voies,’ 7 and 12.

- 92 On the *Laus Spaniae*, see above, [chapter 1](#), n. 40; the *Liber de ortu et obitu patrum*, ‘a sort of “Who’s Who” in the Bible,’ is ed. and trans. into Spanish by Chaparro-Gómez, *De ortu et obitu patrum*; quotation from Fontaine, ‘Isidore de Séville,’ in *Catholicisme*, VI, 160. This text will henceforth be referred to as *De ortu et obitu patrum*.
- 93 See below, p. 29.
- 94 On Ildefonsus and Sisebut, see above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 4, 6, and 10.
- 95 On Sisebut’s style, see Cupiccia, ‘Clausole quantitative e clausole ritmiche,’ 55–7. Interestingly, Sisebut has been considered as a possible model for Hisperic Latin: see Fontaine, ‘Théorie et pratique,’ 77, n. 28; also see below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 39–40.
- 96 See especially *Etymologiae* II, xix and xx: Marshall, *Etymologies Book II*, 69–75. Cf. Fontaine, ‘Théorie et pratique,’ 66–71 and 78–9, and idem, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 768.
- 97 Ibid., I, 323–5, and Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 348–9.
- 98 Fontaine, ‘Théorie et pratique,’ 96.
- 99 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 335–7; see also idem, ‘Théorie et pratique,’ 73–4 and 96–8.
- 100 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 345–60. Such a conflict between different styles is not just Isidore’s but is a common trait with Hispano-Visigothic authors: see Cupiccia, ‘Clausole quantitative e clausole ritmiche,’ 30, 54–5, and 57. Indeed, this duality or ambiguity in matters of style has marked the development of a Christian literature as such, and is detectable in Isidore’s two major sources, Augustine and Gregory: see Fontaine, ‘Théorie et pratique,’ 65–6; idem, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 336–7; idem, ‘Augustine, Grégoire et Isidore,’ 502; and Mohrmann, ‘Augustine and the “eloquentia,”’ 351–70.
- 101 See above, pp. 17–18.
- 102 Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 239–41; 273–4; 300–3; 311–14; and 324–5. See also Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*

X, v, 4–5, in Russell, *The Orator's Education*, 356–9.

- 103 See Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, I, 166, and Ian Rutherford, 'Deinotes,' in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, II, 467–72.
- 104 Fontaine, 'Les trois voies,' 13–14. On the role of synonymy and parallelism in Hebrew verse, see Clemons, *Interactions of Thought and Language*, 310–12.
- 105 See above, pp. 20–2.
- 106 Fontaine, 'Augustine, Grégoire et Isidore,' 503–4, and idem, 'Les trois voies,' 16–17.
- 107 For an overview of Isidore exegetical production, see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 183–98.
- 108 Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 314–18, quotation at 314.
- 109 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 349–50, and idem, 'Les trois voies,' 15–16.
- 110 di Capua, 'Lo stile commatico,' 215–20; on the *Synonyma* as a source of prayers, see below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 159–64.
- 111 See above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 10–11.
- 112 See above, [chapter 1](#), n. 126.
- 113 The Mozarabic antiphonary of León attributes to Isidore two compositions, the *Benedictio lucernae ante altare* and the *Benedictiones* for the Ascension Day Mass: ed. Brou and Vives, *Antifonario visigótico*, II, 281–2 and 332 respectively. See CPL, no. 1217 *a* and *b*, and *Index*, nos. 151 and 134. On the scholarly debate on these two texts and relevant bibliography, see Brou, 'Problèmes liturgiques,' 193–209, esp. 194–201, and Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 413–40. Leander composed some sacred music, as Isidore himself states in his *De uiris illustribus*, xli, 58: see Codoñer-Merino, *El 'De uiris illustribus'*, 150; and so did his pupil Braulio as related by Ildefonsus of Toledo: see idem, *El 'De uiris illustribus' de Ildefonso*, 130.
- 114 German Prado, 'Mozarabic Melodics,' 237–8.
- 115 See also *De ecclesiasticis officiis* I, v, 2 and II, xii, 2 where the *suauitas* and *dulcedo* of vocal music are praised as more effective than speech in moving the audience: see Lawson, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, 6 and 71–2. Cf. Fontaine, 'Théorie et

pratique,' 83–4, nn. 40 and 41.

116 See above, pp. 24–7.

117 See above, p. 28.

118 Fontaine, 'Théorie et pratique,' 92.

119 See *Etymologiae* I, xxxvi and xxxvii (*De schematibus* and *De tropis*) and II, xxi (*De figuris uerborum*); cf. Fontaine, 'Théorie et pratique,' 79–80.

120 See the opinion expressed by Isidore on Cyprian, Ambrose, Hilary, John Chrysostom, and Gregory the Great in the *Versus in bibliotheca* and in *De uiris illustribus*, vi, xvi, and xxvii: see Sánchez Martín, *Isidori Versus*, 217–25, and Codoñer-Merino, *El 'De uiris illustribus'*, 137–8, 143, and 148–9. In all cases, Isidore praises these Fathers of the Church for their ornamented rhetoric: cf. Fontaine, 'Théorie et pratique,' 80–1.

121 See above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 11–14; see also Fontaine, 'Théorie et pratique,' 88–91, and idem, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 532–4 and 869–71.

122 On the priority of pedagogical preoccupations in Isidore's literary activity, see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 352–4; see also above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 10–11, and below, pp. 33–4.

123 See above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 11–14.

124 On the relationship between Africa and Spain in Isidore's days, see above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 8–9.

125 On Cyprian, see above, pp. 20–1.

126 Mohrmann, 'Augustine and the "eloquentia,"' 363–8; Fontane, 'Les trois voies,' 3–6; and Cupiccia, 'Clausele quantitative e clausele ritmiche,' 31–2.

127 See below, pp. 33–4. On the role of memory in medieval pedagogy, see Riché, 'La mémoire dans l'enseignement médiéval'; see also below, [chapter 6](#), p. 168.

128 'Theorie et pratique,' 93, n. 58.

129 See above, pp. 19–20.

130 Cupiccia, 'Clausele quantitative e clausele ritmiche,' 54–5.

131 Fontaine, 'Theorie et pratique,' 87.

132 Fontaine has noted some intriguing parallels between

Isidore's culture and style and the decorative taste and technique of the contemporary Visigothic art, with its peculiar mixture of late antique Hispano-Roman elements and the traits of a new aesthetics: see his *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 882–4.

- 133 Ibid., II, 819. See also Fontaine, 'Isidoro e la cultura del suo tempo,' 38–9.
- 134 Isidore himself must have observed a frequent and fervent practice of prayer: see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 244.
- 135 See above, pp. 19–20. The following discussion is especially indebted to Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 179–81.
- 136 See above, pp. 19–20.
- 137 Fontaine, 'Pénitence publique et conversion personnelle,' 151.
- 138 Ibid., n. 31, and Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 164; see also Cupiccia, 'Clausole quantitative e clausole ritmiche,' 63.
- 139 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 164.
- 140 Fontaine, 'La vocation monastique,' 362–3. Isidore's final aim is far from any mystical or ascetic excess: see above, pp. 19–20.
- 141 'La raison semble y tenir la place d'un Dieu que le livres sapientiaux de l'Ancient Testment ... avaient appelé "la Sagesse":' see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 172; see also above, p. 19.
- 142 On Isidore's philosophical culture, see Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 593–732, esp. 722–6 on Epicureanism and Stoicism.
- 143 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 179.
- 144 Douglas, *Tusculan Disputations*, 80–2, esp. 82.
- 145 Brandt and Laubmann, *Lactantii Opera omnia*, 215, lines 14–18. See also Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 702–4, esp. 703, n. 3. Interestingly, Boethius too drew on this passage from Lactantius in his *De consolatione philosophiae*: see Courcelle, *La Consolation de la Philosophie*, 58, n. 4.
- 146 Fontaine suggests as a possible antecedent of this passage

both Seneca's *Epistolae ad Lucilium* and Cyprian's preface to his *Ad Fortunatum*: see his 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 180.

147 Codoñer-Merino, *El 'De uiris illustribus,'* 145–6.

148 Fontaine, 'Théorie et pratique,' 78, and idem, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 704–5.

149 Fontaine, 'Théorie et pratique,' 87, n. 46, and idem, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 704.

150 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 180.

151 It could be speculated that Isidore's hesitation in publishing the *Synonyma* was also due to their being imbued with values deriving from pagan philosophy: see above, pp. 18–19 and n. 29.

152 Fontaine, 'Isidore de Séville,' in *Catholicisme*, VI, 164.

153 See above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 7–8.

154 See above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 9–11.

155 Hillgarth, 'Old Ireland,' 205. On the 'Isidorian Renaissance,' see Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 863–88; see also Cupiccia, 'Clausole quantitative e clausole ritmiche,' 27–9, and Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, I, 67–114.

156 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 337–42, and Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, I, 67–8. On Isidore's restaurative aims, see above, [chapter 1](#), p. 13.

157 Hillgarth, 'Old Ireland,' 207. Only Hillgarth writes: 'St Isidore ... is balanced between two worlds.' I rather agree with a more dialectic view of Isidore's culture and spirituality such as that expressed by Fontaine on many occasions: see for example his 'Isidore de Séville,' in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, VII. 2, 2011–14.

158 PL 83, 827–8.

159 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 186–7.

160 Ibid., 189, n. 60.

161 See above, p. 28.

162 See above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 10–11.

163 On Isidore's reservations, see above, nn. 29 and 151.

According to Hussey, the *Synonyma* would have been crucial

to the definition of the Anglo-Saxon concept of *peregrinatio*: see his 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' esp. 134–7.

- 164 Fontaine, 'Isidore auteur "ascétique,"' 194–5.
- 165 Elfassi, 'Synonyma,' 224, and idem, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 109–10.
- 166 See below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 45–6, and [chapter 6](#), pp. 155 and 159–60.
- 167 See above, [chapter 1](#), n. 1, and below, [chapter 3](#), n. 155.
- 168 See below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 159–64.
- 169 The best discussion of the epitomes of the *Synonyma* is still that by Arévalo, rptd. in PL 81, 589–95.
- 170 Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 151–2, quotation at 151.
- 171 Ed. Rochais, *Liber scintillarum*, and idem, *Livre d'étincelles*.
- 172 See Rochais's charts of Defensor's sources in his *Liber scintillarum*, 245–54, esp. 253, and idem, *Livre d'étincelles*, 332–42, esp. 341. Further borrowings of Defensor from Isidore's *Synonyma* and *Sententiae* have been noted in subsequent studies: see Di Sciacca, 'An Unpublished *ubi sunt* Piece,' n. 71, and Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 110, n. 3; see also Díaz y Díaz, 'Review of H. Rochais.'
- 173 *Handlist*, no. 470, and *Catalogue*, no. 256. A microfiche facsimile of this manuscript is available in Lucas et al., *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile V*.
- 174 Ed. Rhodes, *The Old English 'Liber scintillarum.'*
- 175 Ptd. in PL 83, 1247–52. See *CPL*, no. 1227a; *Index*, no. 134; and *CPPMA IIB*, no. 3434; see also Robles Carcedo, *Prolegómenos*, 15.
- 176 This text is attested in at least two recensions attributed to various authors; a long recension is ptd. in Fortunato de São Boaventura, *Commentariorum de alcobacensi manuscriptorum bibliotheca libri tres* (Coimbra, 1827), 378–90, while a short one is ptd. in PL 17, 749–52; what is probably a truncated version of the long recension is ptd. in PL 87, 457–8. See *CPL*, no. 1289; *Index*, nos. 303 and 383; *CPPMA IIA* no. 28b, and *IIB*, nos. 3006, 3431, 3482, and 3541; and Elfassi, 'Synonyma,' 224, n. 101.

- 177 A convenient edition in parallel columns of the *De norma uiuendi* and the two PL versions of the *De nouae uitae institutione* as well as of the relevant passages from the *Synonyma* is in Robles Sierra, 'La conversión,' 328–57.
- 178 Cf., however, Elfassi, 'Synonyma,' 224–5 esp. nn. 101 and 102.
- 179 Wright, 'Apocryphal Lore and Insular Tradition,' 127; the palimpsest in question is St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 908, on which see further below, [chapter 3](#), p. 64.
- 180 See below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 70–1, [chapter 5](#), pp. 109–12, and [chapter 6](#), pp. 169–70.
- 181 Ptd. in PL 158, 677–86.
- 182 Bultot, 'Les "Synonyma"'; cf. Cross, "'Ubi sunt" Passages,' 25. The *Synonyma* and the *Exhortatio* occur jointly in at least a manuscript witness: see also Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 123, n. 78.
- 183 Ptd. in PL 184, 1199–306.
- 184 On the authorship of this text, see Ferdinand Cavallera, 'Bernard (apocryphes attribués à saint),' in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, I, 1499–502.
- 185 See below, [chapter 5](#), p. 110.
- 186 See above, pp. 17–18.
- 187 *Speculum Xpistiani* (London: c. 1486); the *Speculum* is attributed to a certain John Watton, whose *floruit* is dated c. 1360–70. On the *Synonyma* as a source or companion text within manuscripts of *florilegia*, see above, p. 34, and below, [chapter 3](#), pp. 45–6, and [chapter 6](#), pp. 155 and 159–60.
- 188 Arévalo suggested a dating to s. xv: see PL 81, 594.
- 189 'Hoccleve's *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville Again,' 424–5, quotation at 425. On the Oxford manuscript, see Hunt, *A Summary Catalogue*, no. 1963, II, 135–6.
- 190 'Hoccleve's *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville Again,' 424–5. On the Oxford manuscript, see Hunt, *A Summary Catalogue*, no. 4061, II, 819–21.
- 191 Ed. Burrow, *Hoccleve's 'Complaint' and 'Dialogue'*, 2–33; the lines dependent on the *Tractatus* are 316–71.

192 ‘Hoccleve’s *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville Again,’ 424–5 and 427.

3. Isidore and the *Synonyma* in the British Isles

- 1 While the use of the term ‘France’ to refer to the old Roman province of Gaul later occupied by the Franks and other Germanic tribes may at times be an anachronism, I will nevertheless use it in the course of my discussion for the sake of consistency.
- 2 Duft, ‘Iromanie – Irophobie.’ If Bischoff can be taken to represent the former, the most censorious representative of the latter is Coccia, who refuted what he considered the myth of early medieval Irish culture in his ‘La cultura irlandese precarolingia.’ Sims-Williams approaches the wider concept of ‘Celticity’ in his ‘Celtomania and Celtoscepticism’; for a survey of the knowledge of classical and late antique literature in early medieval Ireland, see Herren, ‘Classical and Secular Learning.’
- 3 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese in Frühmittelalter,’ henceforth just ‘Wendepunkte.’
- 4 Gorman, ‘The Myth,’ 55; see also idem, ‘A Critique,’ esp. 190–7 and 201–6.
- 5 See, for example, Herren, ‘Irish Biblical Commentaries,’ 406–7.
- 6 Ibid., 396–406; Ó Cróinín, ‘Bischoff’s Wendepunkte’; and Wright, ‘Bischoff’s Theory.’
- 7 Herren, ‘The Authorship of the *Lorica*,’ 45; see also Hillgarth, ‘Visigothic Spain,’ 189, and Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 213. Scepticism about the early and pervasive reception of Isidore’s scholarship in Ireland has been aired by Smyth in her ‘Early Irish Cosmography,’ 101.
- 8 Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 408. See also above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 7 and 11.
- 9 The name of this author is attested with various spellings; here I follow *CPL*. On Laidcenn’s date of death, see, among

others, Grosjean, 'Quelques exégètes irlandais,' 93; Hillgarth, 'The East,' 451, and idem, 'Old Ireland,' 216; James, 'Ireland and Western Gaul,' 362–86; Herren, 'The Authorship of the *Lorica*,' 49, and idem, 'On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance,' 245; cf. idem, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* I, 36, and *BCLL*, nos. 293–4.

- 10 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 5; ed. Adriaen, *Egloga quam scripsit Lathcen*. On the debated authorship of the *Egloga*, see *CPL*, no. 1716; *BCLL*, no. 293; Anspach, 'Das Fortleben Isidors,' 337; Grosjean, 'Quelques exégètes irlandais,' 94; Gorman, 'The Myth,' 63; and Ó Cróinín, 'Bischoff's Wendepunkte,' 219–20. On Isidore's *De ortu et obitu patrum*, see above, [chapter 2](#), n. 92.
- 11 Ed. and trans. into English by Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* II, 76–89. On the authorship of this hymn, see *ibid.*, 42–5 and 56–62, and Herren, 'The Authorship of the *Lorica*,' 47–9.
- 12 See esp. lines 37–77 in Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* II, 80–7; cf. idem, 'The Authorship of the *Lorica*,' 47–9.
- 13 *The 'Hisperica famina.'* II, 39–41. On the *Hermeneumata Pseudo-Dositheana*, see Lendinara, 'Introduction,' in her *Anglo-Saxon Glosses and Glossaries*, 11–12.
- 14 The '*Hisperica famina*' is attested in a number of recensions: for the relevant editions, see *BCLL*, nos. 325–30.
- 15 Herren, 'The Authorship of the *Lorica*,' 46–9.
- 16 Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* I, 20; but cf. Winterbottom, 'Review of *The "Hisperica famina."* I,' 109.
- 17 Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* I, 17 and 20; see also idem, 'On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance,' 246, and Winterbottom, 'Review of *The "Hisperica famina."* I,' 106 and 109.
- 18 Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* I, 19–22.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 66.
- 20 Herren, 'The Authorship of the *Lorica*,' 49.
- 21 Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* I, 39–44, and idem, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* II, 1 and 23–31; but cf. Winterbottom, 'Review of *The "Hisperica famina."* I,' 106–7.

- 22 See below, pp. 58–62.
- 23 Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 311–15, esp. 312–13.
- 24 Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* I, 32–5, and idem, 'The Authorship of the *Lorica*,' 39–42.
- 25 Winterbottom, 'Review of *The "Hisperica famina."* I,' 106.
- 26 'The *Hisperica famina*,' 31–41, quotation at 41.
- 27 Ed. Löfstedt, *Virgilius Maro Grammaticus. Opera omnia*. See *BCLL*, nos. 295–6; on the knowledge of Isidore by Virgilius, see Winterbottom, 'Review of *The "Hisperica famina."* I,' 108–9.
- 28 Virgilius's name itself may well have been either a pseudonym or, more likely, the result of learned word-play: see Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*. I, 151, n. 48, and Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 235. An overview of the existing literature on Virgilius Maro is *ibid.*, 45–6, esp. nn. 13–16. See, in particular, Herren, 'Virgil the Grammarian,' 51–3; idem, 'The Hiberno-Latin Poems,' 141–2, esp. n. 1; and idem, 'Some New Light,' 35–42. See also Gorman, 'The Myth,' 57–8, n. 44; Herren, '*Bigerro sermone clefabo*,' 253–7; Polara, 'Virgilio Marone e la parodia,' 119; and Smolak, 'Der dritte Vergil.'
- 29 Law, *Wisdom, Authority and Grammar*, 3; see also idem, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 240, n. 1.
- 30 Bischoff, 'Die europäische Verbreitung,' 182; idem, 'Die "zweite Latinität,"' 11–16; Herren, 'Virgil the Grammarian,' 71; idem, 'The Hiberno-Latin Poems,' esp. 143 and 155; and Ó Cróinín, 'The Date, Provenance, and Earliest Use.' But cf. Löfstedt, 'Spät- und Vulgärlateinisches,' 126, and Orchard, 'Some Aspects,' esp. 182.
- 31 Herren, 'Scholarly Contacts,' 41.
- 32 Cf. Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' 215, and Gorman, 'The Myth,' 57–8, esp. n. 44.
- 33 Herren, 'Irish Biblical Commentaries,' 405–6, quotation at 406.

- 34 Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* I, 27–32; idem, 'Some New Light,' 45–6 and 58–60; and idem, 'On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance,' 247–9; see also Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 227–9, and 242, esp. n. 12. But cf. Smyth, 'Early Irish Cosmography,' 91–4, esp. 91, and the counter-arguments presented in turn by Ó Cróinín, 'The Date, Provenance, and Earliest Use,' 16–19.
- 35 On *De differentiis uerborum*, see above, [chapter 1](#), n. 140; on *De natura rerum*, see below, pp. 55–8.
- 36 Herren, *The 'Hisperica famina.'* I, 17, and Winterbottom, 'Review of *The "Hisperica famina."* I,' 107. See also above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 27 and 29.
- 37 See above, [chapter 2](#), p. 27.
- 38 'Ireland and Spain,' 15–16. See also Carracedo Fraga, 'Irish Elements,' 40–1, esp. n. 20.
- 39 Ed. Löfstedt, *Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus*. According to Law and Lapidge and Sharpe, however, the correct title for this text is *Congregatio Salchani filii de uerbo*: see *BCLL*, no. 306, and Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 44, n. 1; on the sources as well as origin and dating of the *Ars Malsachani*, see *ibid.*, 35 and 40.
- 40 Ed. Bischoff and Löfstedt, *Anonymus ad Cuimnannum*. On the sources of the *Anonymus*, as well as its dating and author, see *ibid.*, xiii–xvii and xx–iii; see also *BCLL*, no. 331.
- 41 According to Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 39, the only grammatical texts which can be attributed with certainty to a seventh-century Irish milieu are the works by Virgilius Maro and a lost work on the verb used by Malsachanus and Clemens Scottus.
- 42 See above, n. 40.
- 43 See below, pp. 47, 59–60, and 67–8.
- 44 *CPPMA IIB*, no. 3430; ed. Hellman, *De XII abusiuis saeculi*. For the dating of this text, see Hillgarth, 'Old Ireland,' 213, and *BCLL*, no. 339. On the popularity of this text in Anglo-Saxon England, see below, [chapter 5](#), p. 143, esp. n. 263, and [chapter 6](#), n. 29.

- 45 Ed. Díaz y Díaz, *Liber de ordine creaturarum*; on its sources, see *ibid.*, 32–44. A reprint of Díaz y Díaz’s edition, with an English translation and updated notes, is being prepared by M. Smyth for the series ‘SLH.’ This text will henceforth be referred to as *De ordine creaturarum*.
- 46 On the attribution of *De XII abusiuis saeculi* to Isidore, see Espósito, ‘Notes on Latin Learning – III,’ 222–3 and 229.
- 47 Cf. *CPL*, no. 1189; *CPPMA IIA*, no. 1084; *Index*, no. 134; and *BCLL*, no. 342. *De ordine creaturarum* is not mentioned in either Braulio’s *Renotatio* or Ildefonsus’s *De uiris illustribus*.
- 48 ‘Sobre el “Liber de ordine creaturarum,”’ 166; see also Ó Cróinín, ‘Bischoff’s Wendepunkte,’ 217, esp. n. 48; cf. Gorman, ‘The Myth,’ 57.
- 49 On the Isidorian pseudepigrapha, see above, [chapter 1](#), n. 113.
- 50 Ed. in *SHM I*, 189–205. See *Index*, no. 134; *CPL*, no. 1194; *CPPMA IIA*, no. 2671; and *BCLL*, no. 779. The manuscript tradition attests to another two texts with a similar title: the *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*, which is an authentic Isidorian text (ptd. in *PL* 83, 207–424; see *Index*, no. 121; *CPL*, no. 1195; *CPPMA IIA*, no. 2655); and the *Liber de uariis quaestionibus aduersos iudaeos*, which is spurious (ed. Vega and Anspach, *Liber de uariis quaestionibus*; see *Index*, no. 134, and *CPPMA IIA*, no. 1087). On the prolonged controversy about the authenticity and textual relationships of these three texts, see *CPPMA IIA*, nos. 2683–4; Hillgarth, ‘The Position of Isidorian Studies,’ 843–4; and Elfassi, ‘*Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*,’ 203.
- 51 Ed. McNally, *Der irische ‘Liber de numeris.’* See *CPPMA IIA*, no. 2674; McNally, ‘Isidoriana,’ 436; and Bischoff, ‘Eine verschollene Einteilung,’ 9–10; see also below, pp. 40–1, 43, and n. 185.
- 52 Ed. Carracedo Fraga, *Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum*. See *CPPMA IIA*, no. 2656c, and *BCLL*, no. 780. Recently, Dolbeau has suggested some emendations to Carracedo Fraga’s edition: see his ‘Comment travaillé un compilateur.’ On the typically Irish features of the *Liber de ortu et obitu*

patriarcharum, see Carracedo Fraga, ‘Irish Elements,’ 40–9. This text will henceforth be referred to as *De ortu et obitu patriarcharum*.

- 53 See above, [chapter 2](#), n. 92. On the spurious texts dependent on *De ortu et obitu patrum*, see CPPMA IIA, nos. 2656 c–g.
- 54 Smyth, ‘The Irish *Liber de numeris*,’ 292; see also below, p. 43.
- 55 See, among other studies by James E. Cross on this subject, his ‘The Use of Patristic Homilies,’ 120–1 and 124.
- 56 See the relevant entry, and Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 235.
- 57 ‘Acca of Hexham,’ and *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 46–8.
- 58 ‘Isidorian Pseudepigrapha,’ 316. See also Hillgarth, ‘Old Ireland,’ 452.
- 59 See above, p. 38.
- 60 ‘Wendepunkte,’ nos. 1 A–C, 3, 4, 5, 6 B, 11 A–C, 22 A–B, and 33.
- 61 ‘Wendepunkte,’ nos. 24 and 36; see also below, n. 87. Bischoff also pointed out the use of Isidore’s *Etymologiae* and *De ecclesiasticis officiis* in the so-called ‘Man-glosses,’ a group of interlinear and marginal glosses to the Gospel of Matthew, which are, however, post-Carolingian: see his ‘Wendepunkte,’ 270–3.
- 62 ‘The Myth,’ 52–5 and 60; see further Gorman’s comments on the individual texts in his ‘Updated Bibliography on the Items Listed in the “Wendepunkte,”’ *ibid.*, 59–85.
- 63 See at least the comprehensive studies by Charles D. Wright, ‘Biblical Commentaries – Old and New Testaments,’ in SASLC, 90–112; *idem*, ‘Apocryphal Lore and Insular Tradition’; *idem*, ‘Bischoff’s Theory’; and Herren, ‘Irish Biblical Commentaries.’
- 64 *The Reference Bible*, x–xi.
- 65 On this text, see above, [chapter 1](#), n. 133.
- 66 On this text, see above, [chapter 1](#), n. 126.

- 67 See below, nn. 184–5.
- 68 On the *Quaestiones de nouo quam de uetere Testamentum*, see above, n. 50. For an overview of the sources of the *Bibelwerk*, see MacGinty's table in his *The Reference Bible*, 333–9. See also idem, 'The Pentateuch of the *Reference Bible*'; McNamara, 'Plan and Source Analysis'; and Kelly, 'Das *Bibelwerk*: Organization and *Quellenanalyse*.'
- 69 See, in the order, *BCCL*, nos. 762, 293, 783, 341, 768, and 776.
- 70 *BCCL*, nos. 1259–60.
- 71 'Biblical Commentaries – Old and New Testaments,' in *SASLC*, 95 and idem, 'Apocryphal Lore and Insular Tradition,' 128–33.
- 72 Wright, 'Biblical Commentaries – Old and New Testaments,' in *SASLC*, 96. This text has been edited by Carol Scheppard, 'Keepers of the Faith: Irish Exegetes and Psalter Study in the Eighth Century' (unpubl. PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1997); extracts have been edited by McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study,' 285–90.
- 73 Wright, 'Bischoff's Theory,' 136–7 and 139, quotation at 137. The *Expositio* has been edited by Kavanagh, 'The *Expositio IV euangeliorum*'; on the question of authorship and origin, see *ibid.*, I, 90–9 and 110–11. See also *BCLL*, no. 341.
- 74 'Bischoff's Theory,' 122–3. A partial edition of the glosses and commentary is in Karl Köberlin, 'Eine Würzburger Evangelienhandschrift (M. p. th. f. 61 s. VIII)' (unpubl. PhD diss., Augsburg, 1891).
- 75 'Bischoff's Theory,' 134–5. See also the edition by Seán de Paor, 'An Edition and Commentary on *Pauca in epistolas S. Pauli*' (unpubl. PhD Diss., Trinity College Dublin, 1999).
- 76 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 2; see also *BCLL*, no. 1258; ed. Gorman, 'A Critique,' 212–33.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 182–8.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 184; see also Elfassi, '*Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*,' 207 and relevant bibliography. On this Isidorian text, see

above, n. 50.

79 'Bischoff's Theory,' 145–73.

80 See *SHM* I; McNally's edition includes eight 'Wendepunkte' items, as well as the *Quaestiones de nouo quam de uetere Testamentum* and the *Prebium de multorum [sic] exemplaribus*: see above, n. 50 and below, p. 43.

81 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 13; ed. in *SHM* I, 213–19; see also McNally, 'Two Hiberno-Latin Texts,' 388–9, and the notes to the text, 394–6 and 399–401.

82 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 14 I; ed. in *SHM* I, 133–49.

83 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 14 II; ed. in *SHM* I, 150–1.

84 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 18; ed. in *SHM* I, 225–30.

85 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 28; ed. in *SHM* I, 220–4.

86 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 35; ed. in *SHM* I, 3–27.

87 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 36; ed. in *SHM* I, 53–124; see also above, p. 41, and n. 61.

88 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 39; ed. in *SHM* I, 181–6.

89 Ptd. PL 83, 97–130; for a description of this text, see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 195–6; this work will henceforth be referred to as *Allegoriae*.

90 Ptd. PL 83, 155–80; for a description of this text, see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 193; this work will henceforth be referred to as *Prooemia*.

91 See *SHM* I, 263–7. On these three pseudo-Isidorian texts, see above, pp. 40–1.

92 'Wendepunkte,' 229–30.

93 Ed. in *SHM* I, 161–71.

94 Ibid., 155–6.

95 Ibid., 158–9; see also *BCLL*, no. 777, and Wright, 'Bischoff's Theory,' 147, n. 88; on the *Liber de numeris*, see above, pp. 40–1.

96 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' nos. 16 I and II; see also *BCLL*, nos.

764 and 1267. Ed. Rittmueller, *Liber questionum in euangeliiis*.

97 Ibid., *30–*36; for a discussion of the origin of the two recensions, see *ibid.*, *63–*67 and 103*–108*.

98 Ibid., 551–2.

99 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte,’ nos. 30 and 31; see also *BCLL*, nos. 773 and 774; both ed. in *SHM* II, 1–101, and 103–31 respectively.

100 Ibid., xv.

101 Ibid. See also above, p. 41.

102 *SHM* II, 156–8.

103 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte,’ no. 32; see also *BCLL*, no. 1268; ed. Brearley, ‘The *Expositio Iohannis*.’

104 Ibid., 151.

105 Ibid., 155–7 and 200–19; on the *Liber numerorum*, see below, nn. 184–5.

106 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte,’ no. 27; see also *BCLL*, no. 345; ed. Cahill, *Expositio euangelii secundum Marcum*; trans. into English by *idem*, *The First Commentary on Mark*.

107 Wright, ‘Bischoff’s Theory,’ 137–8, quotation at 120; but cf. Herren, ‘Irish Biblical Commentaries,’ 400–1.

108 Cahill, *Expositio euangelii secundum Marcum*, 100*–22*; see also *idem*, ‘The Pseudo-Jerome Markan Commentary.’

109 *Expositio euangelii secundum Marcum*, 113*.

110 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte,’ no. 6 A; see also *BCLL*, no. 1261, and *Handlist*, no. 909; ed. McNamara, *Glossa in psalmos*; on the sources of this gloss, see *ibid.*, 56.

111 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte,’ no. 25; see also *BCLL*, no. 299; ed. Breen, *Ailerani Interpretatio mystica et moralis*.

112 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte,’ no. 12; see also *BCLL*, no. 300; ptd. PL 101, 729.

113 Breen, *Ailerani Interpretatio mystica et moralis*, 1–2; Isidore’s texts may just have reached Ireland by the end of Ailerán’s life. On the patristic sources of the *Interpretatio mystica*, see *ibid.*, 111–62.

114 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte,’ nos. 34 A and B; see also *BCLL*, nos.

760–1; ed. Frede, *Ein neuer Paulus Text und Kommentar*.

- 115 Wright, 'Bischoff's Theory,' 136 and 139.
- 116 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 37; see also *BCLL*, no. 781; ed. Lo Menzo Rapisarda, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*; rptd. in PLS 4, 1850–63.
- 117 Kelly, 'Bede and the Irish Exegetical Tradition,' 405–6.
- 118 Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte,' no. 38; see also *BCLL*, no. 291; ptd. PL 35, 2149–200; another edition with English translation is in Gerard MacGinty, 'The Treatise *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*: Critical Edition with Introduction, English Translation of the Long Recension and Some Notes' (unpubl. PhD diss., National University of Ireland, 1971).
- 119 Herren, 'Irish Biblical Commentaries,' 401–4; see also Wright, 'Bischoff's Theory,' 139 and 147.
- 120 Ed. Gorman, 'An Unedited Fragment.'
- 121 Ed. Bieler, *Adamnani De locis sanctis*.
- 122 Ed. De Coninck, *Theodori Expositionis in psalmos Iuliano aeclanensi interprete*.
- 123 Ptd. PL 91, 189–394; the PL text is a long interpolated recension of the commentary: see further below. For an extensive study of this commentary, see Gorman, 'The Commentary on the Pentateuch.' On the 'Irish symptoms' of this text, see *ibid.*, 69–72 and 89–90, and Wright, 'Biblical Commentaries – Old and New Testaments,' in *SASLC*, 94.
- 124 Gorman, 'The Commentary on the Pentateuch,' 65–8 and 255–6; see also *CPPMA IIA*, nos. 2026 and 2028.
- 125 Gorman, 'The Commentary on the Pentateuch,' 256–61, esp. 256–8, and 266.
- 126 See above, n. 123.
- 127 'The Commentary on the Pentateuch,' 86–96; the interpolations to the first three chapters of the commentary on Genesis are ed. *ibid.*, 96–107.
- 128 'Bischoff's Theory,' 169.
- 129 Gorman, 'The Commentary on the Pentateuch,' 262–4; see also the study of one of the witnesses of the g-recension by Azzimonti, "'Sicut dictum uidimus.'"

- 130 'The Commentary on the Pentateuch,' 263–4.
- 131 Ibid., 262–3, and Azzimonti, "Sicut dictum uidimus," 287–98.
- 132 Gorman, 'The Commentary on the Pentateuch,' 264; the excerpt in question includes the so-called *addition mystique*: see below, pp. 55–6.
- 133 Ed. Bieler and Carney, 'The Lambeth Commentary'; see also Wright, 'Biblical Commentaries – Old and New Testaments,' in *SASLC*, 104.
- 134 Bieler and Carney, 'The Lambeth Commentary,' 30, lines 187–9.
- 135 Herren, 'Irish Biblical Commentaries,' 396–7. This treatise is ed. and trans. Meyer, *A Fragment of an Old-Irish Treatise*. See also Wright, 'Biblical Commentaries – Old and New Testaments,' in *SASLC*, 96–7.
- 136 Ó Néill, 'The Old Irish Treatise on the Psalter,' 148–9 and 155–6.
- 137 'The Myth,' 54.
- 138 Ed. Lehner, *Florilegium frisingense*.
- 139 Ibid., xv–xxxv, and Wright, 'Florilegium Frisingense,' in *SASLC*, 114–15.
- 140 Lehner, *Florilegium frisingense*, xiii–xiv and xxxvi.
- 141 Ibid., xv, xxxv, and 137–8.
- 142 *CPPMA* IB, no. 5304; ptd. PL 83, 1217–21.
- 143 *CPPMA* IIA, no. 174; ptd. in PL 83, 1227–44. This text consists of a longer, spurious recension of an authentic work by Gennadius (*floruits. v^{ex}*), which is ptd. PL 42, 1213–22. See also *CPL*, no. 958 and 958a, and *CPPMA* IIA, nos. 766 and 1085.
- 144 Lehner, *Florilegium frisingense*, xxxv and 137–8.
- 145 Ibid., xiv.
- 146 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 34–5, and below, [chapter 5](#), p. 109, and [chapter 6](#), p. 158.
- 147 Lehner, *Florilegium frisingense*, xxxv.
- 148 See above, n. 140.

- 149 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 34–5. Besides the *Liber scintillarum* and the *Florilegium frisingense*, the *Synonyma* were drawn on in at least two *florilegia* attributed to Alcuin, namely the *Liber de uirtutibus et uitiiis* and *De laude Dei*: see below, p. 70, [chapter 4](#), p. 78, and [chapter 6](#), pp. 155 and 159–60.
- 150 See above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 10–11.
- 151 Ed. Wasserscheleben, *Die irische Kanonensammlung*.
- 152 Ibid., vi, and M. Lapidge, ‘Canon Law,’ in *BEASE*, 81–2; see also *BCLL*, nos. 612–13, and relevant bibliography; Davies, ‘Isidorian Texts,’ 212–16; Dumville, ‘Ireland, Brittany, and England,’ 85–7; Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 124.
- 153 Ed. Martín, *Isidori hispalensis Chronica*.
- 154 Ptd. PL 83, 899–902. See *CPPMA* IIA, no. 1076. For an analysis of the use of each of these Isidorian works by the compiler(s) of the *Hibernensis*, see Davies, ‘Isidorian Texts,’ 222–42; Davies, however, does not consider the *Synonyma*.
- 155 Elfassi, ‘Trois aspects inattendus,’ 132–4. Excerpts from the *Synonyma* were in turn included, though second-hand, in all the major canonical collections of the Middle Ages, most notably those by Ivo of Chartres, Gelasius, and Peter Lombard as well as derivative texts: see Elfassi, ‘Trois aspects inattendus,’ 139–50; see also above, [chapter 2](#), p. 34, and below, pp. 67–8.
- 156 ‘Isidorian Texts,’ 243. The *Historia gothorum* has also been included among the Isidorian sources of the *Hibernensis*: see Hillgarth, ‘Old Ireland,’ 217; idem, ‘The East,’ 451; and Bischoff, ‘Die europäische Verbreitung,’ 181. On the *Historia gothorum*, see above, [chapter 1](#), n. 40.
- 157 Hillgarth, ‘Old Ireland,’ 217–18.
- 158 Ed. Calder, *Auracept na nÉces*.
- 159 Herren, ‘On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance,’ 243–4.
- 160 Hillgarth, ‘The East,’ 452.
- 161 In the following survey of the knowledge and use of Isidore’s works by Anglo-Saxon authors, I generally rely on Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, and the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* on-line database; of the latter I have, however, considered only the entries tagged as ‘certain,’ ‘probable,’ and ‘possible’ direct

source (S1, S2, and S3). Further sources are acknowledged in the relevant endnotes.

- 162 For a thorough introduction to Theodore and Hadrian, their life and culture as well as their school in Canterbury, see Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 5–189; see also Lapidge, ‘The Career of Archbishop Theodore’; idem, ‘The School of Theodore and Hadrian’; idem, ‘The Study of Greek’; Stevenson, *The ‘Laterculus Malalianus’*; finally, see Lapidge’s two entries on ‘Hadrian’ and ‘Theodore,’ in *BEASE*, 225–6 and 444–6, respectively.
- 163 Ed. Maestre Yenes, *Ars Iuliani toletani*.
- 164 Hillgarth, ‘Old Ireland,’ 218, and idem, ‘Ireland and Spain,’ 11, esp. n. 5.
- 165 Hillgarth, ‘Old Ireland,’ 218 and 227, n. 31. See also below, [chapter 7](#), pp. 177–9.
- 166 Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 189, n. 236.
- 167 See Di Sciacca, ‘Isidorian Scholarship,’ 76–91 and relevant bibliography.
- 168 Ed. and trans. Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 298–423.
- 169 Ibid., 421 and 532, and Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 177–8.
- 170 Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 204–5.
- 171 Lapidge, ‘The School of Theodore and Hadrian,’ 152–5, and Pheifer, ‘The Canterbury Bible Glosses.’
- 172 Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 173–9 and 545–6. There are two complete editions of the Leiden glossary, one by Hessels, *A Late Eighth Century Latin–Anglo-Saxon Glossary*, and the other by Glogger, *Das Leidener Glossar*; the Old English glosses are also ed. Holthausen, ‘Die Leidener Glossen.’
- 173 Batches xxvii and xlv contain glosses to *De natura rerum*; batch xxvi contains glosses to *De ecclesiasticis officiis*: see Di Sciacca, ‘Isidorian Scholarship,’ 85–9, and Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 176.
- 174 ‘An Isidorian Epitome’; the edited text is at 459–83; in the following discussion I rely on Lapidge’s introductory study to

the epitome, 443–59.

175 Ibid., 445.

176 On the Épinal-Erfurt glossary, see Pheifer, ‘Early Anglo-Saxon Glossaries,’ 18 and 44; the Old English glosses in this glossary are idem, *The Old English Glosses in the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary*. On the Werden glossaries, see Di Sciacca, ‘Isidorian Scholarship,’ nn. 53–4. For a facsimile edition of both the Épinal-Erfurt and Werden I, see Bischoff et al., *The Épinal, Erfurt, Werden and Corpus Glossaries*, 13–17 and 75–8, respectively.

177 ‘An Isidorian Epitome,’ 453.

178 Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 7–9, esp. 8; Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, 4; and M. Lapidge, ‘Aldhelm,’ in *BEASE*, 25–7, esp. 25.

179 Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 267–8.

180 Ed. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 226–323.

181 Ed. ibid., 524–8; see also the new edition by Howlett, ‘*Aldhelmi Carmen rhythmicum*.’

182 Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 181.

183 Ed. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 35–204; partly transl. by Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 34–47, notes at 187–91; for the dating of the *Epistola*, see ibid., 12.

184 Ptd. PL 83, 179–200. On Aldhelm’s use of this text, see Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 32 and 187; cf. Bischoff, ‘Eine verschollene Einteilung,’ 9–10.

185 See *Index*, nos. 107–8; Hillgarth, ‘The Position of Isidorian Studies,’ 832 and 840; *CPL*, no. 1193 and *CPPMA* IIA, no. 2670; but cf. Lapidge and Sharpe, McNally, and Wright, according to whom the *Liber numerorum* is spurious like the *Liber de numeris*: see *BCLL*, nos. 778 and 1254; McNally, ‘Isidoriana,’ 436; and Wright, ‘Florilegia and Dialogues,’ in *SASLC*, 112–14. On the *Liber de numeris*, see above, pp. 40–1 and n. 51.

186 See below, pp. 55–8, esp. 55–6.

187 Howe, ‘Aldhelm’s *Enigmata*.’ One of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the *Synonyma*, the St Petersburg codex, contains a copy of Aldhelm’s *Enigmata* alongside other

Isidorian texts: see below, p. 69.

188 See Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 86–115 and 318–20.

189 See below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 149–51.

190 Cf. Winterbottom, ‘Aldhelm’s Prose Style,’ 61.

191 From chapter x ‘De alternae interrogationis et responsionis uicissitudine duabus litteris discreta’: see Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 81, lines 11–16.

192 On the different titles of the Isidorian text and its association with Augustine, see above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 16–18.

193 See above, [chapter 2](#), p. 16.

194 Elfassi, ‘*Synonyma*,’ 224.

195 See below, p. 68.

196 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 16 and 18–19.

197 Elfassi, ‘*Synonyma*,’ 223–4; see also below, pp. 75–6.

198 Elfassi, ‘*Synonyma*,’ 224. Hussey favours a French way of transmission of the *Synonyma tout court*: see his ‘Ascetics and Aesthetics,’ 43–52 and 59–60.

199 Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 71–2; see also below, p. 56.

200 *Biblical Commentaries*, 2, n. 6; see also Di Sciacca, ‘Isidorian Scholarship,’ 99–102.

201 Orchard, *The Poetic Art*, 3–5; see also Ó Cróinín, ‘The Irish Provenance,’ 244, and Herren, ‘Scholarly Contacts,’ 29–44. Aldhelm’s Irish tuition is, however, not universally agreed upon: cf. Winterbottom, ‘Aldhelm’s Prose Style,’ 46–62; Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 6–7; M. Lapidge, ‘Aldhelm,’ in *BEASE*, 25–7.

202 M. Lapidge, ‘Aldfrith,’ in *BEASE*, 25; Herren, ‘Scholarly Contacts,’ 39–40; Ireland, ‘Aldfrith and the Irish Genealogies’; and idem, ‘Aldfrith and the Learning of a *sapiens*’; see also below, pp. 56–7.

203 M. Lapidge, ‘Felix,’ in *BEASE*, 181.

204 Ed. Colgrave, *Felix’s Life of Saint Guthlac*.

205 On Felix and the legend of St Guthlac, see *ibid.*, 1–19; M. Lapidge, ‘Felix,’ in *BEASE*, 181; Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, 1–12; idem, ‘An Inventory’; and idem, ‘Guthlac, St,’ in

BEASE, 222–3.

- 206 ‘Defensor of Ligugé’; my thanks to Prof. Bremmer for allowing me access to his entry prepublication; see further below, [chapter 4](#), pp. 99–103. On the Latin literary sources of Felix’s *Vita* and their interaction with native oral tradition, see Wieland, ‘*Aures lectoris*,’ 170–7.
- 207 Roberts, ‘An Inventory,’ 201–3, and idem, ‘Guthlac, St,’ in BEASE, 222–3. See also Wieland, ‘*Aures lectoris*,’ 176–7, esp. nn. 41 and 43; Sarah Downey, ‘Intertextuality in the “Lives of St Guthlac”’ (unpubl. PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2004); and further below, [chapter 4](#), pp. 99–100.
- 208 See below, [chapter 4](#), pp. 100–3.
- 209 Ed. Colgrave, *Two Lives of St Cuthbert*, 60–139.
- 210 Laistner, ‘The Library,’ 257, and Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 212; Lapidge refers to Isidore’s work as *Chronica maiora*, that is, the longer of the two recensions in which the text has been transmitted: see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 220–4. On Bede’s *De temporum ratione*, see below, p. 57.
- 211 On Bede’s use of this text, see Laistner, ‘The Library,’ 265, and Elfassi, ‘*Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*,’ 206–7.
- 212 Elfassi, ‘*Sententiae*,’ 217. Elfassi claims that there is no evidence for an early circulation of manuscripts of the *Sententiae* in Anglo-Saxon England: see *ibid.*, 214–15. However, at least two Anglo-Saxon manuscript witnesses of the *Sententiae* date to s. viii², and one of them in particular, namely Luzern, Staatsarchiv, Fragm. PA 1034 / 21007, originated in Nothumbria: see *Handlist*, nos. 773 and 848. 4; see also below, p. 54.
- 213 Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 212–15; see also McCready, ‘Bede, Isidore and the *Epistola Cuthberti*,’ 79–87, and idem, ‘Bede and the Isidorian Legacy,’ 42–72.
- 214 See below, pp. 57–8.
- 215 Cf. Sánchez Martín, *Isidori Versus*, 219, and Jones, *Bedae Opera de temporibus*, 312, rptd. in idem, *Bedae Opera didascalica*. III, 622–3; Bede, however, does not attribute these lines to Isidore but to common knowledge.
- 216 CLA III, 299; cf. *Index*, no. 123, and Beeson, *Isidor-Studien*,

- 217 For a survey of the existing literature, see McCready, 'Bede, Isidore and the *Epistola Cuthberti*,' 75–6, esp. n. 1.
- 218 'Bede and the Isidorian Legacy,' 73.
- 219 Ed. Dümmler, *Epistolae karolini aevi II*, 501–5; see also Jullien and Perelman, *Auctores Galliae*, I, 268–9. On the debt to Isidore, see Parsons, 'The Medieval Theory,' 133, and Story, 'Cathwulf,' 8.
- 220 'An Isidorian Epitome,' 454–5.
- 221 M. Lapidge, 'Willibald of Mainz,' in *BEASE*, 478.
- 222 M. Lapidge, 'Hygeburg,' 'Willibald,' and 'Wynnebald,' in *BEASE*, 246, 477–8, and 495–6.
- 223 See below, pp. 68–9 and 72–5.
- 224 See below, pp. 55–8.
- 225 See below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 155 and 159–60.
- 226 See below, pp. 71–2.
- 227 See M. Lapidge, 'Æthelwold,' in *BEASE*, 19 and relevant bibliography.
- 228 See also below, pp. 74–5, and [chapter 6](#), pp. 164–5.
- 229 On Lantfred, his work, and the cult of St Swithun, see the recent extensive study by Lapidge, *The Cult of St Swithun*.
- 230 R.C. Love, 'Birinus, St,' in *BEASE*, 67.
- 231 Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, lxxxii.
- 232 See below, p. 58.
- 233 *Catholic Homilies* I, 2 and II, 1; however, according to Godden, the borrowing from the *De ecclesiasticis officiis* seems to have been via Paul the Deacon's Homiliary: see his *Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, 16–17 and 348.
- 234 *Ibid.*, 220.
- 235 *Ibid.*, 20 and 664.
- 236 *Ibid.*, 234, 448–66, 490, and 500. The *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* on-line database tags the *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum* as 'probable' or 'possible' source, whether direct or multiple, because it might be that Ælfric borrowed from Isidore's text via the pseudo-Bedan *In Pentateuchum commentarii*, on which

see above, pp. 44–5. However, Godden thinks that the Isidorian work was ‘probably a more likely source’: see his *Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, 449.

237 Ed. Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*, I, 260–3, and Lucas, *Exodus*.

238 *Handlist*, nos. 263, 573, 578, 713, 742, 780, 818. 5, and 851. 6.

239 See *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, appendixes A, B, C, and D, and the concluding ‘Catalogue of Classical and Patristic Authors and Works Composed before AD 700 and Known in Anglo-Saxon England,’ esp. 309–13.

240 Ptd. PL 83, 449–538; for an introduction to this work, see Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité*, 191–2.

241 See above, [chapter 1](#), n. 11.

242 *Handlist*, nos. 263, 573, and 713.

243 *Ibid.*, nos. 188. 8, 460, 467, 568, 575.

244 Lapidge, ‘Surviving Booklists,’ 132–9, item 47, and *idem*, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 139–40, item 16.

245 *Ibid.*, 312 and 309 respectively; see also above, n. 212.

246 Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 310–13.

247 See above, pp. 49–52, and below, pp. 71–2; see also [chapter 4](#), and [chapter 6](#).

248 See below, pp. 68–74.

249 See below, pp. 74–5.

250 Jones, ‘The Book of the Liturgy,’ 667.

251 *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 127.

252 Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 1–150, esp. 19–84; the stemma is at 70 bis. On Fontaine’s edition, see Orlandi, ‘*Recensio e apparato critico*,’ 3 and 30–2.

253 On the multiple recensions of Isidore’s works, see above, [chapter 2](#), n. 10.

254 Ed. Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 328–35. On Sisebut and Isidore, see above [chapter 1](#), p. 10.

255 *CLA* VII, 848; see also *Handlist*, no. 786, and Bischoff, ‘Die europäische Verbreitung,’ 185.

256 *Traité de la nature*, 74–5 and 83; see also below, p. 58.

- 257 Ed. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 494, and trans. Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 164. For the dating of the epistle and identification of its sender, see Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 494; Herren and Lapidge, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 146–7; and Orchard, *The Poetic Art*, 4.
- 258 *Traité de la nature*, 77–8; the map is at 85.
- 259 Ibid., 76 and 81, n. 2; cf., however, Bischoff, ‘Die europäische Verbreitung,’ 185–6; idem, ‘Eine verschollene Einteilung,’ 14–20; Hillgarth, ‘Visigothic Spain,’ 186–8; and Ó Cróinín, ‘A Seventh-Century Irish Computus,’ 423–4.
- 260 *Traité de la nature*, 77–8 and 85; see also below, pp. 64–5.
- 261 See above, pp. 47–9.
- 262 Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 79–80.
- 263 Ibid., 80; see also Hillgarth, ‘Visigothic Spain,’ 188.
- 264 Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 42–4 and 80.
- 265 Ibid., 80; on Aldfrith, see above, p. 50.
- 266 See *Historia ecclesiastica* IV, 26 and V, 18, in Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, 426–31, esp. 430, and 512–17, esp. 512.
- 267 See the *termini* given above, pp. 55–6.
- 268 Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 75, and Hillgarth, ‘Visigothic Spain,’ 188.
- 269 Peter S. Baker, ‘Computus,’ in *BEASE*, 119–20; see also Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion*, xxxiv–lxxiv.
- 270 ‘The Irish Provenance,’ 529–33.
- 271 Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 214; see also Hillgarth, ‘Ireland and Spain,’ 15. Isidore is still one of the main sources of a computistical and a geographical tract written by the ninth-century Irish monk Dicuil active at the Carolingian court of Louis the Pious: see Esposito, ‘A Ninth-Century Astronomical Treatise,’ 4 and 6; idem, ‘An Irish Teacher,’ 665–6; and idem, ‘Dicuil,’ 330 and 337.
- 272 Ed. Jones, *Bedae Opera didascalica*. III, 580–611; for the dating, see ibid. I, 174.
- 273 Ed. Jones, *Bedae Opera didascalica*. II.
- 274 Jones, ‘The “Lost” Sirmond Manuscript,’ and idem, *Bedae*

Opera de temporibus, 105–13.

- 275 ‘The Irish Provenance,’ 233–8 and 242–6, and idem, ‘A Seventh-Century Irish Computus’; see also idem, ‘The Date, Provenance, and Earliest Use,’ 16–19, and Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian’s Letter ‘De controuersia paschali,’* 18–25 and 101–5. Cf., however, Smyth, ‘Early Irish Cosmography,’ 95–100, and idem, ‘The Physical World,’ 206 and 213; see also Smyth’s monograph, *Understanding the Universe*.
- 276 Ed. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 480–6, and trans. Lapidge and Herren, *Ald-helm: The Prose Works*, 155–60. Ehwald dated the letter to 680, but Herren and Lapidge have argued for an earlier dating to 672.
- 277 Ed. Jones, *Bedaes Opera didascalica*. I, 174–234.
- 278 McCready, ‘Bede, Isidore and the *Epistola Cuthberti*,’ 80–3 and 85–7.
- 279 Our source is Cuthbert’s *Epistola de obitu Bedae*: see Dobbie, *The Caedmon’s Hymn*, 117–29, esp. 122–3. For an overview of previous scholarship and a new interpretation of Cuthbert’s text, see McCready, ‘Bede, Isidore and the *Epistola Cuthberti*,’ esp. 76–7 and 88–93.
- 280 Cf. Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 74 and 83, and McCready, ‘Bede, Isidore and the *Epistola Cuthberti*,’ 84; see also Bischoff, ‘Die Verbreitung,’ 185, n. 88.
- 281 Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 74–5.
- 282 Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion*, lxxxiv and lxxxviii–ix; see also above, p. 53.
- 283 Gorman, ‘The Diagrams,’ 535, and Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion*, lxxxiv.
- 284 Prof. D.N. Dumville’s personal communication.
- 285 See CLA VII, 842, and Lehmann, *Fuldaer Studien*, 4–6; Lehmann has shown that this Basel manuscript (fols. 17v–18r) also contains a book-list which is the earliest record of the Fulda library: ed. *ibid.*, 48–50. This book-list features the *Synonyma*, possibly the copy preserved in Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, F. III. 15c: see Lapidge, ‘Surviving Booklists,’ 100; idem, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 151–3, item 11; and below, p. 73 and n. 432.

- 286 *Traité de la nature*, 31–2 and 80–1.
- 287 Ibid., 80; see above, pp. 56–7.
- 288 See above, pp. 51–2, and below, pp. 72–4.
- 289 ‘The Authorship of the *Culmen*.’
- 290 Hillgarth, ‘Ireland and Spain,’ 4. Cf. Gorman, ‘The Myth,’ 42–5, and Ó Cróinín, ‘Bischoff’s Wendepunkte,’ 205–6.
- 291 O’Rahilly, ‘A Note on the “Culmen,”’ 109.
- 292 Bischoff, ‘Wendepunkte,’ 219–20; McNally, ‘The “*tres linguae sacrae*,”’ esp. 395–6; Carracedo Fraga, ‘Irish Elements,’ 48–9; and Wright, ‘The Irish Tradition,’ 349.
- 293 See above, [chapter 1](#), n. 75.
- 294 Bischoff, ‘Eine verschollene Einteilung,’ 285, n. 43, and Dold and Duft, *Die älteste irische Handschriften-Reliquie*, 89–90.
- 295 CLA VII, 995; Bischoff, ‘Die europäische Verbreitung,’ 180; Dold and Duft, *Die älteste irische Handschriften-Reliquie*, 89; and Duft, ‘Irische Handschriftenüberlieferung,’ 931.
- 296 Bischoff, ‘Die europäische Verbreitung,’ 180, and Hillgarth, ‘Visigothic Spain,’ 183 and 187, n. 4.
- 297 Prof. D.N. Dumville’s personal communication. B.C. Barker-Benfield is of the same opinion: quoted by Marshall, ‘Isidore,’ 195, n. 1.
- 298 Again I owe this information to Prof. D.N. Dumville.
- 299 Carley and Dooley, ‘An Early Irish Fragment’; Bischoff, Brown, and John, ‘Addenda to CLA (II),’ no. 1873; and *Handlist*, no. 524. 4: Gneuss dates the manuscript to s. vii/viii and places its origin in Ireland.
- 300 Ó Cróinín, ‘The Irish Provenance,’ 242–6. See also Herren, ‘Scholarly Contacts,’ 26–9, and above, p. 57.
- 301 Ed. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 486–94, and trans. Lapidge and Herren, *Ald-helm: The Prose Works*, 160–4, esp. 163. Ehwald dated the letter to 686 × 690; I here follow the dating by Lapidge and Herren. See also Herren, ‘Scholarly Contacts,’ 30–2.
- 302 Cook, ‘Who Was the Ehfrid?’
- 303 *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 145.

- 304 'The Cult of St Indract,' 180, n. 11.
- 305 Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 145.
- 306 'The Cult of St Indract,' 179 and relevant bibliography. See also Kenney, *The Sources*, 606–8; Radford, 'Glastonbury Abbey,' 104; and P. Rahtz, 'Glastonbury Abbey,' in *BEASE*, 206–7.
- 307 See *Gesta regum anglorum*, I, 22–4 and 28, in Stubbs, *William of Malmesbury*, I, 26–7 and 29.
- 308 See *SASLC* I, 112–13; 121–3; 267–8; and 375–6.
- 309 'The Cult of St Indract,' 180–3; see also Hughes, 'Evidence for Contacts,' 58.
- 310 'An Early Irish Fragment,' 147 and relevant bibliography.
- 311 Williams, *Somerset Medieval Libraries*, 55–76, quotation at 67.
- 312 Carley and Dooley, 'An Early Irish Fragment,' 147.
- 313 Cf. *Index*, no. 105. The two oldest surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the *Synonyma*, namely St Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, Q. v. I. 15, and Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. f. 79, both date to the first half of the eighth century: see below, pp. 68–9.
- 314 'An Early Irish Fragment,' 144–5.
- 315 *Ibid.*, 143; Dold and Duft, *Die älteste irische Handschriften-Reliquie*, 88; Hillgarth, 'Old Ireland,' 213; *idem*, 'The East,' 450; and Porzig, 'Die Rezensionen der *Etymologiae*,' 144–54 and 166–7.
- 316 Reydellet, 'Compte rendu,' 284.
- 317 The following inventory attempts to update the relevant data in Hillgarth, 'Visigothic Spain,' 180–1, n. 64; *Index*, nos. 101–133; and Beeson, *Isidor-Studien*, 6–119; see also below, n. 327.
- 318 *CLA* XI, 1631 and 1632. See also Antolín, *Catálogo de los codices latinos*, III, 481–7, esp. 481–2; but cf. *Index*, nos. 106, 110, 122.
- 319 *CLA* VII, 929; *Index*, no. 105; and Beeson, *Isidor-Studien*, 54. See also Scherrer, *Verzeichniss*, 81–2.
- 320 See above, p. 59, and cf. *Index*, no. 122.
- 321 See above, pp. 59–62, and n. 299.

- 322 *Index*, nos. 111 and 123, and Beeson, *Isidor-Studien*, 44 and 141. On the Milan manuscript, see also Jordan and Wool, *Inventory*, II, 107–9; on the Cambridge manuscript, see also James, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, II, 101–2.
- 323 *CLA* II, 127, and III, 317. Gneuss dates the *Corpus* manuscript to s. viii¹ and traces it to Italy: see *Handlist*, no. 87.
- 324 *CLA* VI, 727a; cf. *Index*, no. 121, and Beeson, *Isidor-Studien*, 109.
- 325 *CLA* IX, 1235; see also Bischoff, ‘Die europäische Verbreitung,’ 177.
- 326 *CLA* I, 43 (corrected in *CLA* IV, xxi); cf. Beeson, *Isidor-Studien*, 116 and 127.
- 327 The manuscripts in question are Paris, BN, lat. 6400G, fols. 112–45 (France, s. vii/viii); Paris, BN, lat. 6413 (NE France, s. viii^{med}); Paris, BN, suppl. lat. 696 (France, s. vii/viii or viii¹); Laon, BM 423 (France, s. vii/viii or viii); London, BL, Harley 5041 (France, s. vii/viii or viii); St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 913 (Anglo-Saxon centre in Germany, s. vii/viii or viii²); finally, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, *D. 23 Sup. (now S.P. Arm. 9, 12; probably Ireland, s. viii). See *CLA* V, 564a; V, 567; V, 608; VI, 766; II, 202a; VII, 976; and III, 329; see also *Index*, nos. 102, 104, 106, 109, 111, and 112; and Beeson, *Isidor-Studien*, 23, 27, 44, 65–6, 73–4, 86–7, 104, and 141; on the Milan manuscript, see Jordan and Wool, *Inventory*, II, 155–6.
- 328 Wright and Wright, ‘Additions to the Bobbio Missal.’
- 329 *Ibid.*, 95–6; for relevant bibliography, see also Sims-Williams, ‘Thought, Word and Deed,’ 87, nn. 51–2.
- 330 Wright and Wright, ‘Additions to the Bobbio Missal,’ 95–6, 123–4, and 137; quotations at 96 and 95.
- 331 *Ibid.*, 110, and Wright, ‘Apocryphal Lore and Insular Tradition,’ 137.
- 332 Wright and Wright, ‘Additions to the Bobbio Missal,’ 82–92.
- 333 Mss. Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, S. xxi. 5, and Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, II. 46 (4000): see *ibid.*, 82–3.
- 334 *Ibid.*, 84–7.

- 335 Ms. Sélestat, Bibliothèque Humaniste 2 (1073): see *ibid.*, 82–3.
- 336 *Ibid.*, 87–9.
- 337 *Ibid.*, 92–4. This addition is ptd. in PL 83, 1003–5.
- 338 Wright and Wright, ‘Additions to the Bobbio Missal,’ 93–4, quotation at 93; the scribe responsible for the items in the first quire may have been the same as the one responsible for the rest of the manuscript: *ibid.*, 95–6, n. 62, 137, and 139.
- 339 See above, pp. 56 and 59–60, and further below.
- 340 See above, pp. 41–2.
- 341 See above, [chapter 2](#), p. 35.
- 342 Wright, ‘Apocryphal Lore and Insular Tradition,’ 124–7.
- 343 *Ibid.*, 125–6 and 144–5, quotation at 125.
- 344 See above, p. 56. See also Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 71, n. 1, and *idem*, *Isidore et la culture classique*, I, 71, n.1.
- 345 *Isidor-Studien*, 120–2.
- 346 Fontaine, ‘Isidore et la mutation de l’encyclopédisme,’ 59.
- 347 *Über direkte Handelsverbindungen*.
- 348 ‘Ireland and Western Gaul,’ 366–70, 374, and 381–6; see also Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, 79–87, 127–8 and 293, n. 40.
- 349 James, ‘Ireland and Western Gaul,’ 373–4, and *idem*, ‘Septimania and Its Frontier,’ 241.
- 350 See, for example, Bischoff, ‘Die europäische Verbreitung,’ 182.
- 351 ‘The East, Visigothic Spain and the Irish,’ 444–7; *idem*, ‘Visigothic Spain,’ esp. 176–82; and *idem*, ‘Ireland and Spain,’ esp. 7 and 12; but cf. Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, 22, n. 84.
- 352 Hillgarth, ‘Visigothic Spain,’ 189–92.
- 353 Hillgarth, ‘The East, Visigothic Spain and the Irish,’ 455–6; *idem*, ‘Visigothic Spain,’ 189–91; and *idem*, ‘Old Ireland,’ 219–21.
- 354 See above, p. 56.
- 355 Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 76, n. 1; see also above, p. 56.

- 356 *The Coming of Christianity*, 38
- 357 'Ireland, Brittany, and England,' 90
- 358 Ibid.
- 359 Ibid., 91, and Dumville, 'Breton and English Manuscripts,' 210 and 212–14. For a sample study of one such book exchange between Brittany and England by the beginning of s. xi, see Simpson, 'Ireland, Tours and Brittany.'
- 360 'Biblical Apocrypha'; on the alleged 'Spanish symptoms' of early Irish devotional literature, see below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 159–60 and 174.
- 361 'Biblical Apocrypha,' 321–2.
- 362 See the standard study by McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church*, and, more recently, idem, *Apocalyptic and Eschatological Heritage*; see also Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, 106–214, and idem, 'Apocryphal Lore and Insular Tradition.' See also below, [chapter 7](#), p. 179.
- 363 Dumville, 'Biblical Apocrypha,' 329–30.
- 364 'Wendepunkte,' no. 17 II, 247–8; cf. Gorman, 'A Critique,' 197, and idem, 'The Myth,' 68. The fragment is ed. Lowe, 'An Unedited Fragment.'
- 365 Ibid., 7.
- 366 'Biblical Apocrypha,' 321–2, quotation at 330.
- 367 See, for example, Henry, *Irish Art*, 118.
- 368 'Ex oriente,' esp. 195–6, 200, and 204.
- 369 Dumville, 'Biblical Apocrypha,' 322, n. 154.
- 370 James, 'Ireland and Western Gaul,' 384, n. 129, and Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, 126–7.
- 371 Hillgarth, 'Ireland and Spain,' 12, and idem, 'Visigothic Spain,' 181.
- 372 James, 'Ireland and Western Gaul,' 381–2.
- 373 'Ireland and Spain,' 14–16.
- 374 Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, 128. See also James, 'Ireland and Western Gaul,' 363.
- 375 'Compte rendu,' 285.
- 376 See above, p. 49.

- 377 Herren, 'On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance,' 250, and above, pp. 38–41.
- 378 See above, pp. 47–55.
- 379 See above, pp. 56 and 64; Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 71, n. 1.
- 380 Hillgarth, 'Ireland and Spain,' 13–14, quotations at 14.
- 381 'Isidorian Texts,' 242.
- 382 Ibid., 243.
- 383 See above, p. 49, and below, pp. 75–6.
- 384 See above, [chapter 2](#), n. 10.
- 385 See above, pp. 55–8 and 63–4.
- 386 In the following table, I rely on Gneuss's *Handlist*; I have sometimes noted some minor discrepancies of the latter with Ker's *Catalogue* and *CLA* for which I provide reference in the relevant endnotes.
- 387 *Handlist*, no. 845; cf. *CLA* XI, 1618. See also Dobiaš-Roždestvenskaja and Bakhtine, *Les ancien manuscripts*, 63–8; Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance*, 20, 42, 70, and 130; Elfassi, 'Una edición crítica,' 106; and Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 102–10.
- 388 *Handlist*, no. 946; cf. *Catalogue*, no. 400, and *CLA* IX, 1426. See also Bischoff and Hofmann, *Libri Sancti Kyliani*, 95–6; Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 88–93; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 202–3; and Thurn, *Die Handschriften*, III.1, 66.
- 389 *Handlist*, no. 392; cf. *Catalogue*, no. 210. See also Planta, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts*, 476–7, and Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 271–84.
- 390 *Handlist*, no. 114. See also James, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, II, 360–3, and Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 239–48.
- 391 *Handlist*, no. 415; cf. *Catalogue*, no. 228. See also Nares, *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts*, I, 34, and Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 249–61.
- 392 *Handlist*, no. 752; cf. *Catalogue*, no. 381. See also Lakin and Thompson, *Catalogue*, 34, and Webber, *Scribes and Scholars*, 79.

- 393 *Handlist*, no. 363; cf. *Catalogue*, no. 186. See also Planta, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts*, 31–2, and below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 109–12, and [chapter 6](#), pp. 169–73.
- 394 *Handlist*, no. 461. See also Warner and Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts*, I, 118, and Webber, *Scribes and Scholars*, 145.
- 395 Lapidge, ‘The Archetype,’ 18; see also below, p. 72.
- 396 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 18–19.
- 397 See above, [chapter 2](#), p. 16. The *sigla* assigned by Elfassi to the St Petersburg and Würzburg manuscripts are L and W respectively.
- 398 See above, n. 90.
- 399 Schaller and Könsgen, *Initia*, nos. 1037 and 13113; see also Gneuss, ‘Addenda,’ 304.
- 400 Ed. Hilberg, *Sancti Hieronymi Epistulae*, I, 442–65.
- 401 See below, p. 72.
- 402 See above, pp. 48–9.
- 403 See below, p. 72. See further, Hussey, ‘Ascetics and Aesthetics,’ 55–8.
- 404 See below, pp. 72–4.
- 405 Szarmach, ‘A Return,’ 173 and 176. The *siglum* assigned by Elfassi to this manuscript is O.
- 406 See below, [chapter 5](#), p. 143.
- 407 See below, [chapter 4](#), p. 78, and [chapter 6](#), p. 155. Alcuin’s text will henceforth be referred to as *De uirtutibus et uitiis*.
- 408 See Di Sciacca, ‘The Manuscript Tradition,’ 106–10, and below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 168–9.
- 409 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 16–18 and n. 3.
- 410 The earliest surviving complete manuscript of this homiliary is Cambridge, Pembroke College 25, which is contemporary with the Royal manuscript: see *Handlist*, no. 131, and Cross, *Cambridge Pembroke College MS 25*.
- 411 Thurn, *Die Handschriften*, III.1, 66.
- 412 Ed. Szarmach, ‘A Return,’ 177–81.
- 413 See below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 109–12.

- 414 See below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 169–74.
- 415 See below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 166–8.
- 416 For an analysis of the vernacular glosses to the *Synonyma*, see Di Sciacca, ‘Isidorian Scholarship,’ 92–9.
- 417 The two glosses in question (Hofmann’s *lemmata* 48 and 62) are probably the work of two different glossators; the gloss to *conpedibus* (note the different spelling from PL) has been attributed to a very old hand responsible for around the half of the Old English glosses of the Würzburg manuscript: see Hofmann, ‘Altenglische und althochdeutsche Glossen,’ 58–9.
- 418 Meritt, ‘Old English Glosses,’ 449.
- 419 Di Sciacca, ‘Isidorian Scholarship,’ 91–103. Hussey tenuously associates the Würzburg glosses with the early English glossarial corpus: see his ‘Ascetics and Aesthetics,’ 99–100.
- 420 See below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 159–62.
- 421 Ch 190 (B15.1.6); ed. Birch, *Cartularium saxonicum*, no. 416, I, 581–3, esp. 582; English translation in Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, no. 85, 518–19; see also Finberg, *The Early Charters*, no. 247, 101, and relevant entries in Keynes, *Anglo-Saxon Charters On-Line Database*, and Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*. The *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* on-line database also lists another few charters that drew on other Isidorian texts, but I have not considered them in the present survey.
- 422 See the relevant entry by Rosalind C. Love in the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* on-line database; the *Synonyma* are marked as ‘S3,’ that is ‘possible direct source’ of the relevant charter phrase.
- 423 See above, pp. 45–6; see also above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 34–5, and below, [chapter 5](#), p. 109, and [chapter 6](#), p. 155 and 157–62.
- 424 Thurn, *Die Handschriften*, III.1, 66. The OHG glosses are ed. Hofmann, ‘Altenglische und althochdeutsche Glossen,’ 60.
- 425 *Les ancien manuscripts*, 66, but for *Differentiarum* read *Synonymorum*.
- 426 See above, n. 391.
- 427 Parkes, ‘The Handwriting,’ 127.
- 428 ‘Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany,’ 291.

- 429 *CLA* XI, 1618; Parkes, 'The Handwriting,' 123 and 141–2; McKitterick, 'The Diffusion of Insular Culture,' 412–13; and Lapidge, 'The Archetype,' 17–18; but cf. idem, 'Autographs of Insular Latin Authors,' 108–15.
- 430 Ptd. PL Suppl. 4, 2192.
- 431 Parkes, 'The Handwriting,' 133–4 and relevant bibliography, and A.P. McD. Orchard, 'Boniface,' in *BEASE*, 69–70, esp. 70; but cf. Schaller and Könsgen, *Initia*, no. 8331.
- 432 On this manuscript, see Elfassi, 'Una edición crítica,' 105–10, and idem, '*Synonyma*,' 219–22 and relevant bibliography. The copy of the *Synonyma* contained in this manuscript has been identified with the *Sinonima Sancti Esidori* featuring in the earliest record of the Fulda library: see above, n. 285.
- 433 *CLA* VIII, 1197; see also Hofmann, 'Altenglische und althochdeutsche Glossen,' 52–7.
- 434 Lull's letter is item no. 110 in Tangl, *Die Briefe*, 236–8, esp. 238.
- 435 'Altenglische und althochdeutsche Glossen,' 55.
- 436 Di Sciacca, 'Isidorian Scholarship,' 98–9; see also above, p. 71, and Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 126–32.
- 437 See Haseloff, 'Der Einband des Ragyndrudis Codex,' 42–6, and McKitterick, 'The Diffusion of Insular Culture,' 415. More recently, see Hussey, 'The Franco-Saxon *Synonyma*,' 235–6, and idem, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 122–4.
- 438 McKitterick, 'The Diffusion of Insular Culture,' 415.
- 439 Ibid.
- 440 See above, p. 62.
- 441 See *CLA* V, 664, and Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance*, 129.
- 442 Elfassi, 'Una edición crítica,' 109.
- 443 Ed. Hinschius, *Decretales pseudo-isidorianae*.
- 444 Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 138–9; on the *Synonyma* as a (mostly indirect) source of canonical collections, see above, p. 46, esp. n. 155.
- 445 Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 137–8.
- 446 Ibid., 138.

- 447 *Libri Sancti Kyliani*, 96.
- 448 Recently, another early witness of the *Synonyma*, namely ms. Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek D. 1, fols. 133r–134v, has been highlighted by Elfassi: see his ‘La langue des *Synonyma*,’ 60, n. 5. This miscellaneous codex, however, has no insular connections, as it was written near the end of the eighth century in the Loire region, presumably at Angers, and arrived in Fulda only in 1803: see *CLA* VIII, 1199, and Hausman, *Die Handschriften der hessischen Landesbibliothek*, II, 104–9.
- 449 On Æthelwold, see above, p. 52, and below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 164–5; another, this time still extant copy of the *Synonyma* is listed in the earliest record of the Fulda library: see above, nn. 285 and 432.
- 450 ‘Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany,’ 295–8, 302–3, and 315–17; quotation at 317.
- 451 *Index*, no. 105.
- 452 *Isidor-Studien*, 52–8 and 117–18.
- 453 Hall, ‘Biblical and Patristic Learning,’ 334 and 335; see also Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 127–8, and above, pp. 54–5.
- 454 See above, p. 49.
- 455 See above, pp. 57–8.
- 456 Herren, ‘Scholarly Contacts,’ 29–30.
- 457 See above, p. 50.
- 458 See above, p. 50.
- 459 On the origin of the Tiberius manuscript, see below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 169–71.
- 460 At the head of f. 170v there is the mark ‘.SY.’, which is found in another Isidorian manuscript from Christ Church, Canterbury, now Cambridge, UL, Kk. 1.28: see *Catalogue*, no. 210.
- 461 Scragg, ‘An Old English Homilist,’ 191–2, and idem, *The Vercelli Homilies*, lxxiv–ix, esp. lxxix.
- 462 See above, pp. 67–8.
- 463 See above, pp. 68–71.

4. The Vernacularization of the *Synonyma*: The Case of Vercelli xxii

- 1 Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 366. Vercelli homily xxii has been assigned Cameron no. B3.4.7 (HomU7); ed. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 368–78. It is found on fols. 116v–120v of ms. Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare cxvii: see *Hand-list*, no. 941, and *Catalogue*, no. 394, art. 27; for an exhaustive introduction to the Vercelli Book, see Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, xix–lxxix, and relevant bibliography at xii–xvii. For bibliography on Vercelli xxii, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 35. On the distinction between *homilia*, in the conventional sense given above, and *sermo*, in the looser sense of a prose text of devotional and/or exhortatory content, see Donald G. Scragg, ‘Homily,’ in *BEASE*, 241–2, and Randle, ‘The Homiletic Context,’ 7.
- 2 Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, xix; see also Clayton, ‘Homiliaries and Preaching,’ 152.
- 3 Gatch, ‘Eschatology,’ 142–6, and Ó Carragáin, ‘How Did the Vercelli Collector Interpret *The Dream of the Rood*?,’ 65–7. See also below, [chapter 7](#), pp. 179–80.
- 4 See below, pp. 78–9.
- 5 Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, xxv; idem, ‘The Compilation,’ 203–5; and Szarmach, ‘A Return,’ 174, n. 17.
- 6 ‘Der Vercelli Codex,’ 137–48.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 83–4.
- 8 I have found at least three cases where the Old English is best paralleled by excerpts from the Latin source which are missing in Scragg’s selection and I here underline the verbatim correspondences. One might compare Vercelli xxii, lines 73–4: ‘For ðan sare 7eallum ðam unrotnessum on Pysse worulde we beoð genætte’ [for we are afflicted with sorrow and all the sadnesses in this world], with *Synonyma* I, 26: ‘dolor et tristitia omnibus communia sunt, omnia in hoc saeculo euentu simili sustinemus’ [sorrow and sadness are shared by everyone, in this world we bear all events with a similar outcome]; Vercelli xxii, lines 86–7: ‘Dryhten, þe ic

syngode, swa mycel ic ne gefele swa wyrðe eom' [Lord, I have sinned against you; I do not feel as much as I deserve], with *Synonyma* I, 29: 'Aequalem uindictam peccati mei non sentio, minus percussum me quam merebar agnosco' [I do not feel a punishment equal to my sin, I am aware that I am less beaten than I deserved]; finally, Vercelli xxii, lines 142–4: 'Ac ðonne ðu hine cigst on þinum wordum, ne wiðsac ðu hine on þinum weorcum, ⁊ fram eallum þam þe sio æw forbyr ðe wiðbryt' [but when you invoke him in your words, do not you forsake him in your deeds and restrain yourself from all of those things that the law forbids you], with *Synonyma* II, 3: 'quam inuocas fide, non abneges opere, ab omnibus quae lex uetat abstine' [what you invoke with faith, do not deny with your deeds, abstain from all those things that the law forbids]: see Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 371–2 and 375; and PL 83, 833–45. All translations from Vercelli xxii are adapted from Kerry J. MacArthur, 'Vercelli Homily xxii,' in *The Vercelli Book Homilies*, ed. Nicholson, 147–53. Translations from the Latin are my own unless otherwise specified.

- 9 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 34–6, and [chapter 3](#), pp. 70–2; see also below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 109–12.
- 10 'A Return,' 174–5. See also below, n. 16.
- 11 Szarmach, 'Cotton Tiberius A. iii, Arts. 26 and 27,' 29–32.
- 12 Szarmach, 'The Latin Tradition,' and idem, 'Pembroke College 25, Arts. 93–95.' On the associations between Alcuin's *De uirtutibus et uitiis* and the *Synonyma*, see below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 155 and 170. On the Pembroke homiliary, see above, [chapter 3](#), n. 410.
- 13 On this collection of pseudo-Augustinian *sermones* and on item 58 in particular, see below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 112–14, 124, and 126–7.
- 14 Cf. Szarmach, 'Another Old English Translation,' 105–6, and see below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 135–7.
- 15 See below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 109–12.
- 16 Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 367. See also Förster, 'Der Vercelli Codex,' 83: 'Möglich ist, daß der altenglische

Übersetzer bereits einen so zurecht gemachten lateinischen Auszug vor sich hatte.'

- 17 *The Vercelli Homilies*, 375 and 377. Scragg also suggests that *mala* was mis-read as *multi* and therefore translated as *manige men* in line 158: see *ibid.*, 376 and relevant commentary at 380.
- 18 Although I am aware that some of the people involved in and responsible for the production of texts in Anglo-Saxon England may have been female, § I will refer to all anonymous authors discussed in this book with the masculine pronoun.
- 19 *The Vercelli Homilies*, 367.
- 20 'A Return,' 173–5.
- 21 Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 368, lines 12–13. The only occurrence – besides that in Vercelli xxii – in the surviving Old English corpus of the verb phrase *handa sendan* followed by *on* and accusative is found in another Vercelli Book text, namely *Elene*, line 457: 'on þone halgan handa sendan' [they place their hands on the holy man], where the 'holy man' is Christ grabbed by his persecutors: see Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, 78.
- 22 Here I do not count ms. Tiberius A. iii, since the Old English epitome it contains is drawn from Book II and does not therefore include the phrase in question from *Synonyma* I, 6.
- 23 The five manuscripts I have had the opportunity to consult are St Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, Q. v. I. 15; Salisbury, Cathedral Library 173; Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. f. 79; London, BL, Harley 110; finally, CCC 448. In the first two cases the clause is identical to the edited text in PL, namely 'conserta manu in me pericula ingerunt'; the Würzburg manuscript presents a slightly different syntax: 'conserta in me manu pericula ingerunt'; finally, in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts the clause is also identical to the edited text, but it might be of interest that *conserta* [clasped] is glossed by *inposita* [put upon] and *ingerunt* [they hurl] by *inducunt* [they shove] and *inuehunt* [they inveigh]. The *interpretamentum* *inducunt* is

particularly intriguing as it approaches rather closely to the sense of the Old English ‘hie sendað hire handa on me.’

- 24 The same phrase, although with a different syntax, is used to gloss in Old English three different Latin phrases in Psalms XXXVII, 11 (‘cor meum fluctuabat’); LIV, 5 (‘cor meum doluit’); CVIII, 22 (‘cor meum turbatus est’); CXLII, 4 (‘turbatus est cor meum’).
- 25 On the place of psychology in Isidore’s culture, see Fontaine, *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 671–92, and on the psychological vocabulary of Isidore, esp. 686–9. Isidore distinguishes between *anima* and *animus* once in *De differentiis uerborum*, xxxvii, and twice in *De differentiis rerum*, xxix and xxx: for the former, see Codoñer-Merino, *De differentiis*. I, 250; for the latter see PL 83, 84–6. (Fontaine also quotes *De differentiis uerborum*, liv, from PL 83, 16, as a paragraph explaining the difference between *anima* and *spiritus*: see his *Isidore et la culture classique*, II, 686; but this same paragraph has been expunged as spurious in the edition by Codoñer-Merino: see her *De differentiis*. I, 453.) Furthermore, in the *Etymologiae*, Isidore draws a detailed distinction between *spiritus*, *anima*, *animus*, and *mens*: see *Etymologiae* XI, i, 10–13.
- 26 See below, pp. 95–9.
- 27 Such is the case of the quotation from the Acts of the Apostles XIV, 21 translated from *Synonyma* I, 27 in Vercelli xxii, lines 75–6. The Latin quotation reads: ‘Oportet nos per multas tribulationes intrare in regnum Dei’ [It is necessary for us to enter the Lord’s kingdom through many tribulations], and was literally translated into Old English as ‘us gedafnað þurh manigfealde earfeðnessa to ganganne on heofena rice’ [it is fitting for us to go into the kingdom of heaven through manifold afflictions].
- 28 On the structural as well as ornamental use of such ‘echo-words’ in Old English poetry, see Beaty, ‘The Echo-Word in *Beowulf*’; Hieatt, ‘Dream Frame and Verbal Echo’; Kintgen, ‘Echoic Repetition’; Orchard, *A Critical Companion to ‘Beowulf,’* 78; Rosier, ‘Generative Composition in *Beowulf*’; and idem, ‘The Literal Figurative Identity.’

- 29 For a translation of this passage up to ‘forlætene,’ see above, p. 81. The last sentence reads: ‘For these and other sins, the souls will be afflicted in God’s sight.’
- 30 See below my discussion of lines 95–100 and 211–15, at pp. 90–1, and of lines 79–83 at pp. 101–2.
- 31 See above, n. 28.
- 32 (*Ge*)*nætan* occurs again in lines 74, 80, and 85; *ungesælignes* occurs again in line 7, and the cognate adverb *ungesæliglice* occurs in line 57; finally the adjective *ungesælig* occurs in lines 49 and 103.
- 33 Strikingly, within the Vercelli homilies, this is the only occurrence of *wælhreowlic*, while *wælhreow* occurs only once more, namely in Vercelli xiii, line 26: see Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 235. On Vercelli xiii, see below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 127–8. *Wælhreowlic* is strictly a prose word, and, more precisely, an Ælfrician one, as sixteen out of its total twenty-six occurrences are in Ælfrician texts. Likewise, its variant *wælhreawlic* occurs five times in the whole corpus, and all of these occurrences are in Ælfric’s *Second Series of Catholic Homilies*.
- 34 The envelope pattern was first defined and studied with regard to Old English poetry by Bartlett, *The Larger Rhetorical Patterns*, esp. 9. The use of such a pattern is, however, evident also in prose texts.
- 35 See above, p. 80.
- 36 See above, n. 25.
- 37 I count two occurrences of *gast* (lines 2 and 25); six of *mod* (lines 3, 63, 90, 148, 155, and 169); seven of *heorte* (lines 3, 101, 110, 154, 173, 176, and 206); and no fewer than seventeen occurrences of *sawl* (lines 1, 2, 4, 16, 22, 34, 37, 42, 47, 58, 68, 114, 120, 137, 148, 153, and 161).
- 38 See above, pp. 78–9.
- 39 Afterwards the word *nearunes* occurs again in lines 60 and 68.
- 40 See Hofmann, ‘Altenglische und althochdeutsche Glossen,’

57–65; the gloss in question is no. 62 at 61; on the Old English glosses to the Würzburg copy of the *Synonyma*, see Di Sciacca, ‘Isidorian Scholarship,’ 93–6, and above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 71–2.

[41](#) *Synonyma* I, 19, in PL 83, 832.

[42](#) It can reasonably be inferred that the Anglo-Saxon homilist deliberately omitted the two Latin *commata* ‘moriendi uotum, sola mihi mors placet’ from his selection because their insistence on the desire to die must have sounded too morbid and presumably too indebted to Stoic, rather than Christian, ethics: on Stoic influence on Isidore, see [chapter 2](#), pp. 31–2, and below, pp. 98–9.

[43](#) See above, pp. 83–4, and below, pp. 95–6.

[44](#) See, for example, lines 27–33 quoted above and relevant discussion, pp. 81–2; on the role of antithesis in the *stilus ysydorianus*, see also above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 25–6.

[45](#) *Synonyma* I, 21 in PL 83, 832.

[46](#) See above, n. 42.

[47](#) *The Vercelli Homilies*, 366. See also Förster, ‘Der Vercelli Codex,’ 83.

[48](#) Polheim, *Die lateinische Reimprosa*, 294–325, esp. 296. On the *stilus ysydorianus*, see above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 24–31.

[49](#) For a translation of this passage, see above, p. 85 from ‘Therefore’ to ‘in death.’

[50](#) On the principle of correspondence of punishment to sin in Old English, and its probable derivation from the *Visio Pauli*, see Healey, *The Old English Vision of St. Paul*, 51–4; and idem, ‘Visio Sancti Pauli,’ in *SASLC*, 66–7.

[51](#) See above, [chapter 2](#), p. 25 and n. 87.

[52](#) See above, [chapter 2](#), p. 17.

[53](#) The shift to the first person plural in the final, hortatory section is a recurrent feature of Old English homilies: see Randle, ‘The Homiletic Context,’ 7–11; on the final exhortation and its ‘collective nature,’ see esp. 9–10. Indeed, the use of the first person plural has also been identified in

'homiletic' poems: see Orchard, 'Re-reading *The Wanderer*,' 9–10 and 19–20, and Randle, 'The Homiletic Context,' 108–9, 112–16, and 183–6; on the homiletic component of *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*, see below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 139–42.

54 This eschatological dimension has, however, no antecedent in the Latin source: see below, pp. 98–9.

55 I am here keeping to the gender of OE *sawl*.

56 See the translation given above, p. 85 (from 'Woe' to 'in death').

57 See the translation given above, p. 85.

58 On these two words, see above, p. 85.

59 See above, pp. 78–9.

60 Another text featuring an extensive use of polyptoton of words related to the two cognate roots *dem-/dom-* is Vercelli x, ed. in Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 196–213. See, for example, lines 55–7: 'For ðan we a sculon bion ymbhydige ure sawle rædes, ure hiortan reccen gestaðeligen Gode to willan, geþencen þæne dom þe we to gelaðode syndon, ðone deman þe to þam dome cymeð' [Therefore, we must always be solicitous of our soul's counsel and of our heart's governance, and let us strengthen (them) according to the will of God and remember that judgement to which we have been invited and that judge who will come to that judgement]; line 67: 'Dem, la dema, rihtne dom emne dom' [Lo, judge, decree a true judgement and a fair judgement]; line 76: 'Dem, la dryhten, rihte domas' [Judge, O Lord, true judgements]; finally, lines 92–3: 'Dem, la ealra gesceafta recceð scippend steorend, dem rihtne dom' [Pass judgement, lo, ruler and creator and governor of all creatures, pass true sentence]: translation by Kerry J. MacArthur, 'Vercelli Homily x,' in *The Vercelli Book Homilies*, ed. Nicholson, 73–80. It is indeed worth noting that not only does Vercelli x occur in the same manuscript as Vercelli xxii, but it also includes an extended *ubi sunt* passage (lines 203–45) based on *Synonyma* II, 89–91: see below, [chapter 5](#), pp. 116–23. A similar example of polyptoton is found in yet another of the Vercelli Book texts, namely *The Dream of the*

Rood, lines 103b–9: ‘Hider eft fundað / on þysne middangeard mancynn secan / on domdæge dryhten sylfa,/ ælmihtig god, ond his englas mid, / þæt he þonne wile deman, se ah domes gewæld, / anra gehwylcum swa he him ærur her / on þyssum lænum life geearnað’ [On Doomsday the Lord himself will come hither, to this world, to seek out mankind, the almighty God, with his angels, so that he will judge – he who has the power of judgement – everyone as they deserve here in this fleeting life]: see Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, 64. Although the two passages are clearly different enough to exclude any direct link, the two phrases ‘se is dema’ [He is the judge] (Vercelli xxii, line 152), and ‘se ah domes gewæld’ [He has the power of judgement] (*The Dream of the Rood*, line 107b) show parallel syntax. At least another line of *The Dream of the Rood* echoes Vercelli xxii and indeed its Isidorian source, namely line 20b: ‘eall ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed’ [I was all afflicted with sorrows], which one might compare with Vercelli xxii, lines 2–4, and its Latin antecedent: see above, pp. 79–80.

61 Ed. Napier, *Wulfstan: Sammlung*, 134–43; *lænenðlic* occurs at 136.27; on this homily and its relationship with Vercelli xxii, see Di Sciacca, ‘The *Ubi Sunt* Motif,’ 375–80.

62 ‘Eschatology,’ 151 and n. 72. See also Clayton, ‘Delivering the Damned,’ 98; and below, [chapter 7](#), p. 178.

63 See *Synonyma* I, 6–18 in PL 83, 829–32.

64 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 31–2, and above, pp. 88–9.

65 Cameron no. B3.3.10, and *Catalogue*, no. 394, art. 29; ed. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 381–94.

66 See above, [chapter 3](#), p. 50.

67 This codex now makes up the end of ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 509: see *Handlist*, no. 657; *Catalogue*, no. 344, art. 5; and Roberts, ‘An Inventory,’ 202. The Vespasian version has been assigned Cameron no. B3.3.10.1 and is ed. Gonser, *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 100–73.

68 See Roberts, ‘An Inventory,’ 201–3; idem, ‘The Old English Prose Translation’; idem, ‘The English Saints,’ 441–5; and idem, ‘Guthlac, St,’ in *BEASE*, 222–3; see also Gonser’s

convenient edition of the overlapping sections from Vercelli xxiii and the *Vespasian Life* in his *Das angelsächsische ProsaLeben*, 117–34. There are also two Old English verse versions of Guthlac’s legend, namely the Exeter Book poems, *Guthlac A* and *B*, both ed. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*.

- 69 See above, n. 68. On the possible Latin exemplar used by the original Anglo-Saxon translator, see Bolton, ‘The Manuscript Source,’ and idem, *An Old English Anthology*, 64.
- 70 Roberts, ‘The Old English Prose Translation,’ 364–6 and 369.
- 71 The matter covered in Vercelli xxiii corresponds approximately to chapters xxviii to xxxiv of Felix’s work: *ibid.*, 365; Scragg’s *apparatus fontium* reproduces extracts from chapters xxviii to xxxii of the Latin text: see his *The Vercelli Homilies*, 383–92.
- 72 Roberts, ‘The Old English Prose Translation,’ 363 and 365–7.
- 73 It has been suggested that he might be identified with the Vercelli homilist: see Förster, ‘Der Vercelli Codex,’ 86, and Szarmach, ‘The Vercelli Homilies,’ 262; but cf. Roberts, ‘The Old English Prose Translation,’ 374.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 365.
- 75 In this respect, Vercelli xxiii can be associated with the poem *Guthlac A*: see Roberts, ‘The Old English Prose Translation,’ 373–4.
- 76 Roberts, ‘An Inventory,’ 203; idem, ‘The Old English Prose Translation,’ 372–4; and idem, ‘Old English Saints,’ 442–3.
- 77 See Bremmer, ‘Defensor of Ligugé.’
- 78 See above, n. 68. On the sources of the two poems and their relationship to Felix’s *Vita*, see Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, 19–29 and 36–43.
- 79 Colgrave, *Felix’s Life of Saint Guthlac*, 98–9 (Colgrave’s translation).
- 80 See *Synonyma* I, 27–30, in PL 83, 833–4.
- 81 See above, pp. 83–4.
- 82 Cf. above, the quotation from *Synonyma* I, 28, p. 98.

- 83 Vercelli xxii is a unique piece: see above, p. 77. As to Vercelli xxiii, it has been associated from a palaeographical and thematic point of view with the poem *Elene*, which immediately precedes the homily in the Vercelli Book, and with *Guthlac A*: see Roberts, ‘The Old English Prose Translation,’ 373–5, and idem, ‘An Inventory,’ 202; see also above, n. 75.
- 84 See above, pp. 77–8.
- 85 See above, pp. 82–3.
- 86 Cf. above, the quotation from *Synonyma* I, 28, p. 98.
- 87 See above, the list at pp. 96–7.
- 88 Cf. above, the quotation from *Synonyma* I, 28, p. 98.
- 89 Translation adapted from Francis M. Clough, ‘Vercelli Homily xxiii,’ in *The Vercelli Book Homilies*, ed. Nicholson, 155–9, at 156. The corresponding passage from the *Vespasian Life* is practically identical in terms of translation strategy, the only exception being that Vercelli xxiii translates the Latin verb *frangeris* with a doublet followed by a prepositional phrase, that is ‘swencst weccest to forgifenesse þinra gylta,’ while the *Vespasian Life* has only *swencst*. The relevant lines from the *Life* read: ‘forþon swa myccle swa þu þe her on worulde swiþor swencst, swa þu eft byst on ecnysse fæstlicor getrymed; and swa myccle swa þu on þisum andweardan life ma earfoða drigast, swa myccle þu eft on toweardnysse gefehst’: see Gonser, *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, xviii, 124. 40–125. 48.
- 90 Cf. also above, n. 89.
- 91 Cf. above, p. 101.
- 92 *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben*, 52–96, esp. 95. See also above, pp. 99–100, esp. nn. 68–9.

5. The Vernacularization of the *Synonyma*: The *ubi sunt* Topos

- 1 Liborio, ‘Contributi,’ 141, and Matsuda, ‘The *ubi sunt* Passages,’ 65.

- 2 Koch, *Beowulf*, xxvii.
- 3 'De la Bible à François Villon,' 14–15, esp. n. 2, and 33.
- 4 "'Ubi sunt" Passages,' 25. For a survey of the *ubi sunt* motif in English literature, from *The Wanderer* to Yeats, see Cunningham, "'Where Are They?"; on the Middle English period in particular, see Cross, 'The Sayings of St Bernard'; Gray, *Themes and Images*, 183–91; Matsuda, 'The *ubi sunt* Passages'; and Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, 93–7.
- 5 Ed. as item 301 in Morin, *Caesarii Semones*. I, 134–8. This text will henceforth be referred to as *De elemosinis*.
- 6 Cross, "'Ubi sunt" Passages,' 38, and idem, 'The Dry Bones Speak.'
- 7 Di Sciacca, 'The *ubi sunt* Motif.'
- 8 Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, 96; according to Woolf, this formulation of our motif is 'the genuine *ubi sunt* form.'
- 9 Gilson, 'De la Bible à François Villon,' 12–13, and Liborio, 'Contributi,' 145. *Ubi sunt* passages can be found in Isaiah XXXIII, 18; II Kings XIX, 13; Job XIV, v. 10; and St Paul, I Corinthians I, 19–20, which is in fact a quotation from Isaiah. A similar inspiration is also found several times in the Psalms, but there it is never formulated by means of the *ubi sunt* questions: see below, n. 38.
- 10 Gilson, 'De la Bible à François Villon,' 10–11. See also Wisdom II, 3–5 as a source for the cloud or fog and the shadow as a metaphor for the fugacity of earthly life, below, p. 132.
- 11 Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, 96.
- 12 See Cicero, *In M. Antonium oratio philippica*, VIII, viii, 23, and *Oratio pro C. Plancio*, XIII, 33; Seneca, *Epistolae ad Lucilium*, CVII, 1, and *Consolatio ad Heluiam matrem*, XV, 1; Tibullus, *Carmina*, II, iii, 27; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IV, 592–3; VII, 499–500; XI, 422; XIII, 92 and 340–1; see also *Amores*, III, ix, 38–42, although the latter passage does not feature the rhetorical question (*ubi est/sunt?*) proper. Two Greek-speaking authors featuring this motif are Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, XV, 110 D, and Marcus Aurelius, *Ta# eivē*

eèauto#n, VII, 58; VIII, 25; X, 31; XII, 27; on the *ubi sunt* motif in this latter author and the problem of his possible sources, see Liborio, 'Contributi,' 143, n. 8.

- 13 See the letter of sympathy written by Sulpicius Severus to Cicero to comfort him on the death of his daughter Tullia: Cicero, *Epistolae ad familiares*, IV, v, 2–4. See also the two epigrams by the two Greek poets Antipater of Sidon (s. ii B.C.) and Agathias Scholasticus (s. vi), in Paton, *The Greek Anthology*. III, 78–9.
- 14 See Statius's epicedium on Glaucias in *Silvae*, II, i, esp. lines 41–55. See also by the same poet *Thebais*, V, 613–16, and XII, 311–12. A similar inspiration is found in Horace's *carmen* on the death of Archita, although it does not feature the typical rhetorical *ubi sunt* questions: see *Carmina*, I, 28. My survey of the *ubi sunt* motif in the Bible and classical literature intends to be a fuller and revised version of the charts in both Gilson, 'De la Bible à François Villon,' 31–2, and Liborio, 'Contributi,' 203.
- 15 'De la Bible à François Villon,' 32.
- 16 Friedman, 'The *ubi sunt*,' 499, and Liborio, 'Contributi,' 141–3.
- 17 Ibid., 148.
- 18 Friedman, 'The *ubi sunt*,' 500–5. Indeed, one of the earliest examples of the combination of the praise of the physical beauty of the deceased and the *ubi sunt* motif is already found in an *epicedium* by Statius: see above, n. 14. Examples include two of the latest and most poignant expressions of the medieval *ubi sunt*, that is the *Ballades des dames et des seigneurs du temps jadis* and the *Regrets de la belle Heaulmière* by François Villon: see further Liborio, 'Contributi,' 194–7.
- 19 Gilson, 'De la Bible à François Villon,' 32, and Liborio, 'Contributi,' 143.
- 20 Friedman, 'The *ubi sunt*,' 499.
- 21 See *De panoplia ad monachos* in Assemani, *Ephraem Opera omnia grece et latine*, III, 219–34, esp. 226–8. On Ephraem, see below, n. 25; for a classical antecedent of the use of the

ubi sunt topos to lament the fleetingness of beauty, see Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead*, xviii, esp. lines 1–2.

22 Liborio, ‘Contributi,’ 174–5.

23 Edmond Beck, ‘Éphrem,’ in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, IV, 798–9.

24 *Lamentationes gloriosissimae Virginis Matris Mariae*, in Assemani, *Ephraem Opera omnia grece et latine*, III, 574–75, esp. 574.

25 Edmond Beck, D. Hemmerdinger-Iliadou, and Jean Kirchmeyer, ‘Éphrem,’ in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, IV, 788–822. On the knowledge of Ephraem in Anglo-Saxon England, see Bestul, ‘Ephraim the Syrian’; Ganz, ‘Knowledge of Ephraim’s Writings’; Sims-Williams, ‘Thoughts on Ephrem the Syrian’; Stevenson, ‘Ephraim the Syrian in Anglo-Saxon England’; finally, Wright, ‘The Old English “Macarius” Homily.’ For the occurrences of the *ubi sunt* motif within the Ephremic corpus, see Assemani, *Ephraem Opera omnia grece et latine*, II, 1–20, esp. 17; 138–45, esp. 139 and 143; 175–83, esp. 179–80; 192–222, esp. 201 and 220; 247–58, esp. 257–8; 377–93, esp. 385; III, 93–104, esp. 95–7; 152–9, esp. 159; 219–34, esp. 227–8; 273–8, esp. 278; 308–14, esp. 310; 401–3; and 574–5, esp. 574; finally, *Syriace et latine*, III, 314–17, esp. 317.

26 See, for example, the *Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi*, on which see below, [chapter 6](#), p. 158, esp. n. 47.

27 *De exitu animi et de secundo aduentu*, CPG III, no. 5258, ptd. in PG 77, 1071–90, esp. 1075–8. Interestingly, Cyril draws for his *ubi sunt* passage on one of Ephraem’s tracts, *De patientia et consummatione huius saeculi*: Assemani, *Ephraem Opera omnia grece et latine*, III, 93–104, esp. 95–7; in particular, Cyril derives from Ephraem the application of the *ubi sunt* to the frailty of feminine beauty as well as the combination of the *ubi sunt* topos with the soul-and-body legend: see above, n. 21 and below, pp. 112–16, 120–1, and 134–5; cf. Liborio, ‘Contributi,’ 151.

28 *Oratio funebris in Meletium episcopum*, CPG II, no. 3180, ptd. in PG 46, 852–64, esp. 854.

- 29 *De exteriori hominis uilitate*, CPG II, no. 3035, ptd. in PG 37, 766–78, esp. 773–4; and *Ad seipsum per interrogationem et responsionem*, CPG II, no. 3036, ptd. in PG 37, 1345–50, and 1345–8.
- 30 See below, p. 126, and nn. 134 and 139.
- 31 See below, pp. 125–6. It might be speculated that anthologies of patristic elaborations on the *ubi sunt* motif circulated in the form of *catenae* commenting on the biblical passages featuring the topos: on such passages, see above, pp. 106–7 and n. 9, and below, p. 132, and n. 38. Indeed, *catenae* on the Psalms, Baruch, and Ecclesiastes have been recorded by Robert Devreesse in his fundamental study on the subject: see his ‘Chaines exégetiques grecques,’ in *Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplement*, I, 1084–233, esp. 1114–39, 1154, 1163–4; see also CPG IV, C 10–41, C 67, and C 100–5, and CPG *Supplementum*, 487 and 489–90. However, *catenae* have an extremely complicated textual history and their possible circulation (in Latin translation) in Anglo-Saxon England remains a suggestion.
- 32 *Conduplicatio* was dealt with by both Cicero (*Ad Herennium*, IV, xxviii, 38), and Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria*, IX, iii, 28): see Caplan, *Ad C. Herennium*, 324–5, and Russell, *The Orator’s Education*, 114–17 (Quintilian names this figure *adiectio*). See also the definitions and examples of *conduplicatio* given in the late Middle Ages by Geoffroi of Vinsauf and John of Garland in Faral, *Les Arts poétiques*, 233 and 324, and Lawler, *The ‘Parisiana poetria,’* vi, 188–91, at 122–3.
- 33 Matsuda, ‘The *ubi sunt* Passages,’ 72.
- 34 Cross, ‘The Sayings of St Bernard,’ 6.
- 35 See below, p. 126.
- 36 On Blickling viii, see below, pp. 123–5; on Vercelli x, see below, pp. 116–23 and 132–4; on Irvine vii and Blickling x, see below, pp. 128–30.
- 37 See below, p. 126.
- 38 An analogous simile is also found in Psalm XXXVIII, 7. In Psalms LXXXIX, 5–6, CI, 12, and CII, 15 human transience is

compared to the ephemeral existence of grass and flowers: see below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 151–4. Finally, in Psalm LXXXIX, 9 human life is said to be like a cobweb (in the Hebrew version of the same psalm the comparison is made with a *flatus uoci*). On Wisdom V, 9, see above, pp. 106–7.

- 39 See below, pp. 128–9. Vercelli xiii also features a shadow simile: see below, pp. 127–8.
- 40 See below, pp. 127–8.
- 41 Cross excluded variant versions and the Alfredian renditions of Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae*, Book II, Metre vii: see his “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,” 25, n. 4; see below, pp. 144–7.
- 42 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 34–5.
- 43 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 70–1, [chapter 4](#), p. 78, and [chapter 6](#), p. 170.
- 44 See above, [chapter 2](#), n. 172.
- 45 On the *Sententiae*, see above, [chapter 1](#), n. 96, and [chapter 2](#), p. 19.
- 46 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,” 27.
- 47 Rochais, *Livre d’étincelles*, 338–41. An echo of Synonyma I, 26 has also been pointed out for *scintilla* 24 of this chapter: see idem, ‘Apostilles,’ 289.
- 48 Rochais, *Livre d’étincelles*, 302, and Cross, “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,” 26–7.
- 49 Rhodes, *The Old English ‘Liber scintillarum,’* 215.
- 50 Cross, “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,” 26.
- 51 The epitome is found at fols. 102r19–103r24; on the Tiberius manuscript, see above, [chapter 3](#), n. 401, and pp. 70–1, and below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 169–73.
- 52 ‘Zu altenglischen dichtungen: 2’; see also Kluge’s earlier article ‘Zu altenglischen dichtungen: 1.’
- 53 Kluge misattributed the *Liber scintillarum* to Bede: see his ‘Zu altenglischen dichtungen: 2,’ 474.
- 54 On the *ubi sunt* passages in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*,

see below, pp. 138–44; on Blickling viii, see below, pp. 123–5; on Napier xlix, see below, n. 97.

55 ‘Old English Precursor,’ 302, n. 43.

56 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,’ 29. In the appendix following his article, Cross provides comments and corrections to Kluge’s diplomatic edition: see *ibid.*, 41–4.

57 ‘A Return,’ 177–81.

58 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 70–1, and below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 168–9.

59 ‘A Return,’ 172–4. Hussey’s expanded analysis confirms Szarmach’s conclusions: see his ‘Ascetics and Aesthetics,’ 346–50 and 424–44.

60 Di Sciacca, ‘The manuscript Tradition,’ 112–13; see also above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 17–18.

61 Szarmach, ‘A Return,’ 168.

62 For example, there is no equivalent of the first period of *Synonyma* II, 93 and of the fifth period of *Synonyma* II, 94 as in the PL edition.

63 Szarmach, ‘A Return,’ 181, lines 53–4.

64 *Synonyma* II, 96.

65 See above, [chapter 4](#), pp. 83–4 and 88–9.

66 *Synonyma* II, 89.

67 On this simile, see below, p. 119. Cross had noted that the source for this passage of the *Synonyma* may not be Isaiah II, 13–15, but Horace’s *Ode* II, 10. I owe this information to T.N. Hall, who has kindly shared with me some private notes by the late Professor Cross. Indeed, the passage in question is much closer to Horace, especially lines 9–12, than to Isaiah: cf. Rudd, *Horace: Odes and Epodes*, 114. On Isidore’s knowledge of classical authors, see above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 7–8.

68 ‘A Return,’ 172–4.

69 *Ibid.*, 174.

70 See above, [chapter 4](#), pp. 77–8.

- 71 See above, [chapter 4](#), pp. 78–9, and below, pp. 135–8.
- 72 See above, [chapter 4](#), pp. 78–9.
- 73 Cameron no. B3.4.55 (HomU55); ed. and trans. into Italian by Zaffuto, ‘Edizione e analisi,’ 178–97. This homily is contained uniquely in ms. CCCC 201, pp. 179–262: see *Handlist*, no. 66; *Catalogue*, no. 50 art. 2; and Scragg, ‘The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,’ 256; for bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 50. On the sources and analogues of other sections of the Macarius Homily, see Di Sciacca, ‘Due note a tre omelie anglosassoni,’ 232–4, 237–8, and 242–9; Lendinara, “*frater non redimit, redimet homo ...*”; and Wright, ‘The Old English “Macarius” Homily.’
- 74 Cameron no. B3.5.8 (HomM8); ed. and trans. into Italian by Luiselli Fadda, *Nuove omelie anglosassoni*, 139–57. The homily is contained uniquely in ms. Cambridge, UL li. 1. 33: see *Catalogue*, no. 18 art. 40, and Scragg, ‘The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,’ 256–7. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 53.
- 75 Di Sciacca, ‘The *ubi sunt* Motif,’ 374–5. Another soul-and-body homily featuring an *ubi sunt* passage, namely Vercelli iv, is discussed below, pp. 134–5.
- 76 See CPPMA IA, nos. 1127–1203; the *Sermones ad fratres* are ptd. in PL 40, 1233–1358. For *Sermo* 68, in particular, see CPPMA IA, no. 1185, ptd. in PL 40, 1354–5.
- 77 CPL, no. 1225; *Index*, no. 134; and CPPMA IB, no. 5306; ptd. in PL 83, 1223–5.
- 78 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,’ 33–6, esp. 35.
- 79 On this phrase, see below, pp. 139–40.
- 80 Translation adapted from Thorpe, *The Ancient Laws*, II, 397.
- 81 See the quotation from *Synonyma* II, 91, above, p. 106.
- 82 PL 83, 838. Selected phrases from this paragraph are also translated in Vercelli xxii; see especially lines 113–14, ‘settað beforan eow þone egeslican dom, eowres deaðes dæg gemunað’ [set before you the terrible doom, and think about

the day of your death]: Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 373.

83 PL 40, 1355.

84 PL 83, 1224–5.

85 Another Latin tag in the *Sermo Augustini*, namely the one introducing the theme of the paschal respite of the damned (lines 82–8), is also attributed to Augustine. On the theme of the respite of the damned, see Healey, *The Old English Vision of St Paul*, 48, and ‘Visio Sancti Pauli,’ in SASLC, 66–7; see also Moffat, *The Old English ‘Soul and Body,’* 33, and Willard, ‘The Address,’ 966–74.

86 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,’ 33–4. Indeed, the Old English homily relies on pseudo-Isidore, *Sermo* 3 for the soul-and-body material as well as for the *ubi sunt* passage. Cf. Luiselli Fadda, *Nuove omelie anglosassoni*, 139–40.

87 See below, pp. 120–1.

88 The compound *godewebb* also occurs in *Warna*, where it translates the Latin *serici strati*: see Szarmach, ‘A Return,’ 178, line 19.

89 See below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 151–2.

90 Cf. Scragg, ‘The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,’ 229 and 249–51.

91 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,’ 37, n. 50.

92 ‘*The Dry Bones Speak*,’ 436.

93 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 184.

94 Cross, ‘*The Dry Bones Speak*,’ 436.

95 The very noun phrase *þa rican gerefan* occurs only once more in Old English, interestingly in another *ubi sunt* passage, namely the one in Napier xxx, which is a variant version of the corresponding passage in Vercelli x: see below, pp. 116–17, and esp. n. 102; however, in Napier xxx the reeves are presented as those who enforce the law and not as abusing their power: see Napier, *Wulfstan: Sammlung*, 148. 30.

96 Cameron no. B3.2.40, 1–6 (Hom S 40); ed. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 196–213; Scragg’s edition is based on the

Vercelli Book text (Scragg's A) of the homily. See *Handlist*, no. 941; *Catalogue*, no. 394 art. 12; and Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,' 230.

97 Cameron no. B3.2.40, 1–6 (Hom S 40); ed. Napier, *Wulfstan: Sammlung*, 250–65. For his edition Napier collated the two complete copies of the homily contained in mss. CCCC 302 (Scragg's K) and 421 (Scragg's N) as well as two fragments surviving in ms. Princeton, UL, W.H. Scheide Collection 71 (Scragg's B): see *Handlist*, nos. 86, 109, and 905; *Catalogue*, no. 56 art. 33, no. 69 art. 9, and no. 382 art. 9; and Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,' 234, 247, and 252. The fragments from the Princeton manuscript correspond to the beginning and the end of Vercelli x and make up Blickling Homily ix: ed. and trans. Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, 104–7.

98 Cameron no. B3.4.3 (HomU3); ed. Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 197–202. It is contained uniquely in ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 343 (Scragg's I): see *Catalogue*, no. 310 art. 80, and Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,' 245. For bibliography on the homiletic pieces related to Vercelli x, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 29–30 and 34.

99 "'Ubi sunt' Passages,' 30–2.

100 On the textual variants of Vercelli x, see Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 191–5, and idem, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,' 234; Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 179–83; Wilcox, 'Variant Texts'; Di Sciacca, 'Il topos dell'ubi sunt,' 238–9, n. 45.

101 Cameron no. B3.2.7 (HomS7); ed. Callison, 'An Edition,' 208–23. On the Corpus item (Scragg's k), see *Handlist*, no. 86; *Catalogue*, no. 56 art. 12; and Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,' 247; on the Cotton Faustina piece (Scragg's J), see *Catalogue*, no. 153 art. 6, and Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,' 246. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 17; see also Szarmach, 'The Vercelli Homilies,' 252.

102 Cameron no. B3.4.27 (HomU27); ed. Napier, *Wulfstan: Sammlung*, 143–52; rptd. in Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*,

396–403. This homily is contained uniquely in ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 113 (Scragg's O): see *Handlist*, no. 637; *Catalogue*, no. 331 art. 23; Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,' 254, and idem, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 395. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 42, and Di Sciacca, 'The *ubi sunt* Motif,' 379–80.

- 103 See above, n. 98, and below, pp. 128–9.
- 104 Scragg's A, I, J, K, k, N, O. Cross considers only the passages contained in A, I, K, N, and O: see his "'Ubi sunt' Passages,' 30–1. My discussion will focus on the *ubi sunt* passage as edited by Scragg and will only occasionally consider its variant versions.
- 105 *The Vercelli Homilies*, 208–11.
- 106 'Variant Texts,' 340–5.
- 107 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 193.
- 108 Wilcox, 'Variant Texts,' 338 and 341, and Funke, 'Alliterierende und rhythmisierende Prosa,' 22–3.
- 109 Wilcox, 'Variant Texts,' 345; see also Szarmach, 'The Vercelli Homilies,' 244–8.
- 110 Zacher, 'Sin, Syntax, and Synonyms,' 66–7; cf. Szarmach, 'The Vercelli Homilies,' 252.
- 111 See above, [chapter 4](#), p. 83, esp. n. 28. See also Bartlett, *The Larger Rhetorical Patterns*; Frank, 'Some Uses of Paronomasia'; Pasternack, *The Textuality*; and Orchard, 'Oral Tradition.'
- 112 See below, pp. 119–20.
- 113 Translations of the selected passages of Vercelli x are all adapted from K.J. MacArthur, 'Vercelli Homily x,' in *The Vercelli Book Homilies*, ed. Nicholson, 78–9.
- 114 PL 83, 865.
- 115 This image occurs also in *The Phoenix*, lines 199–207, and *The Metres of Boethius*, vii, 29–39: cf. Zacher, 'Sin, Syntax, and Synonyms,' 73, n. 48; see Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, 99–100, and Krapp, *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, 161, respectively; however, these poems show no verbal parallels with Vercelli x.

- 116 Bayless and Lapidge, *Collectanea pseudo-Bedae*, 124 and 208.
- 117 Tangl, *Die Briefe*, no. xiv, 21–6, esp. 23.
- 118 Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, 132.
- 119 Breen, ‘Pseudo-Cyprian: *De duodecim abusiuis* and the Bible,’ 233–4; on this text, see above, [chapter 3](#), p. 40, and below, pp. 143–4.
- 120 See above, n. 67.
- 121 See above, [chapter 4](#), pp. 94–9.
- 122 See above, p. 118.
- 123 On the items of this catalogue, especially its ‘jewel’ words, see Zacher, ‘Sin, Syntax and Synonyms,’ 71, nn. 44 and 45.
- 124 Napier, *Wulfstan: Sammlung*, 148. 20. The term *ræste* also features in an analogous catalogue within the *ubi sunt* passage of Blickling viii, which is not based on the *Synonyma*: see below, pp. 123–4.
- 125 See below, pp. 122–3. On the importance of judicial vocabulary and rich word-play linked to the two roots *dem-/dom-* in Vercelli x, see above, [chapter 4](#), n. 60. Judges also feature in an *ubi sunt* passage not dependent on the *Synonyma*, namely in Blickling viii: see below, pp. 123–4.
- 126 In the version of this *ubi sunt* passage contained in Irvine vii, the compound *woruldescrift* has been interpreted as ‘confessors’ rather than ‘secular judges’: see below, pp. 128–9.
- 127 Cameron no. B3.4.19 (HomU19); ed. and trans. Morris, *The Blickling Homi-lies*, 97–105. See *Handlist*, no. 905; *Catalogue*, no. 382 art. 8; and Scragg, ‘The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,’ 234. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 39.
- 128 Cameron no. B3.2.6 (HomS6); ed. Assmann, *Angelsächsische Homilien*, 163– 9. It is contained in mss. CCC 302 and London, BL, Cotton Faustina A. ix: see *Handlist*, no. 86; *Catalogue*, no. 56 art. 11, and no. 153 art. 5; and Scragg, ‘The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,’ 245–7. On its relationship with Blickling viii, see Clemoes’s introduction to the homily in Assmann, *Angelsächsischen Homilien*, 163; Cross, ‘“Ubi sunt” Passages,’ 38–9; finally, D.G. Scragg, ‘Blickling Homily

8,' in SASLC, 130. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 16–17.

129 See below, pp. 128–9.

130 See below, pp. 129–30.

131 See below, pp. 141–4.

132 Translation adapted from Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, 98–100.

133 In addition to the two occurrences in Blickling viii, the phrase *hwyder gewiton* occurs only once more in the Old English corpus, namely in the *Vespasian Life* of St Guthlac: see Gonser, *Das Prosa-Leben*, xiv, 10, at 149; on this text, see above, [chapter 3](#), p. 50, and [chapter 4](#), pp. 99–103.

134 Cross “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,” 38–40; see also below, pp. 126–7. *Sermo* 58 is ptd. in PL 40, 1341–2; the *ubi sunt* passage is in col. 1341; see CPPMA IA, no. 1185. There are, for example, some discrepancies in the catalogue of commodities and in the subjects of the *ubi sunt* questions of Blickling viii and *Sermo* 58. The *ubi sunt* passage in the Latin sermon, in turn, sometimes echoes quite closely the corresponding one in John Chrysostom’s *Ad Theodorum lapsum* 1, especially as in the PG edition: cf. Dumortier, *Á Théodore*, 278, and PG 47, 288; on Chrysostom’s text, see also below, p. 126 and n. 139.

135 Cross, “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,” 39–40; but cf. Dunning and Bliss, *The Wanderer*, 121.

136 Translation adapted from Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, 98. In Assmann xiv, we find again a drastically abbreviated version of this passage: Assmann, *Angelsächsische Homilien*, 165, lines 33–5.

137 Cf. Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, 401–2. See esp. *Necrosima*, xxviii and xxxix in Assemani, *Ephraem Opera omnia syriace et latine*, III, 277–9 and 295–6. See also above, pp. 107–8. Interestingly the *Necrosima* also feature the *ubi sunt* topos: see *Necrosima* lv in Assemani, *Ephraem Opera omnia syriace et latine*, III, 314–17, esp. 317; as well as the soul-and-body legend: see *Necrosima* lix and lxxxi, *ibid.*, 325–6 and 355–6.

138 Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, 402–4.

139 The Latin title of the treatise in question reads *Ad Theodorum*

lapsum 1: CPG II, no. 4305; the Latin version is edited as *De reparatione lapsi* by Dumortier, *Á Théodore*, 257–322, esp. 278–9; see the relevant entry by Thomas N. Hall in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture. Volume 5: C*, ed. Thomas N. Hall (Kalamazoo, MI: WMU. Medieval Institute Publications, forthcoming); I am grateful to T.N. Hall for giving me access to the entry pre-publication and for a stimulating email exchange on the *ubi sunt* topos. See also the *ubi sunt* passage in two spurious homilies transmitted under Chrysostom's names: CPG II, no. 4684, ptd. in PG 63, 637–46, esp. 640–3, and 801–12, esp. 810–11; the latter in particular seems to be indebted to the corresponding passage in *Ad Theodorum lapsum* 1. A brief injunction to look at the decaying and levelling effects of death in the graves immediately precedes the *ubi sunt* questions in Basil's *Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi*: see below, [chapter 6](#), p. 158 and n. 47.

140 See above, n. 5.

141 'The Dry Bones Speak.'

142 Ibid., 434.

143 Morin, *Caesarii Sermones*. I, 135, lines 9–14.

144 CPPMA IA, no. 1183; ptd. in PL 40, 1352–3.

145 PL 40, 1341. The passage is quoted in full below, pp. 136–7.

146 In Blickling viii the injunction is attributed to Augustine, while no such reference is found in the Latin *sermo*. The attribution to Augustine can easily be explained by the fact that the source of the Blickling homily is the pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo* 58 (or a variant of it) and the motif of the warning from the grave to the living is also found in other pseudo-Augustinian texts: see Cross, 'The Dry Bones Speak,' 434, n. 1, and the Latin tags in the *Sermo Augustini* above, pp. 114–16 and n. 85.

147 Dawson, 'Two New Sources,' and Solo, 'The Influence of Caesarius of Arles.'

148 'Textes inédits,' 325–31, and 'L'ancienne collection,' 52. See also CPPMA IA, nos. 1185 and 1202, and PL 40, 1358, n. b.

149 See above, p. 124.

150 Cross, 'The Dry Bones Speak,' 437.

- 151 Cameron no. B3.2.43 (HomS43); ed. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 234–6. See *Handlist*, no. 941, and *Catalogue*, no. 394 art. 15. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 31.
- 152 Translation adapted from K.J. MacArthur, ‘Vercelli Homily xiii,’ in *The Vercelli Book Homilies*, ed. Nicholson, 89.
- 153 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 181; in the following discussion of Irvine vii I am indebted to Irvine’s detailed introduction to her edition, at 179–96. See also above, n. 98.
- 154 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 181.
- 155 See above, pp. 116–23. See also Cross, ‘“Ubi sunt” Passages,’ 30–2, and Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 192–5.
- 156 See above, n. 97.
- 157 Cross, ‘“Ubi sunt” Passages,’ 30–1.
- 158 *Old English Homilies*, 195.
- 159 Ibid.
- 160 See above, pp. 121–2. Cf. also Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, ‘Glossary,’ s.u. *woruldescrift*; and Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.u. *scrift*.
- 161 Cameron no. B3.4.20 (HomU20); ed. Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, 106–15. See *Handlist*, no. 905; *Catalogue*, no. 382, art. 10; and Scragg. ‘The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,’ 234 and 241. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 39–40.
- 162 ‘*The Dry Bones Speak*,’ 438–9.
- 163 Translation adapted from Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, 110–13.
- 164 ‘*The Dry Bones Speak*,’ 439.
- 165 Ibid. On the role of alliteration in other *ubi sunt* passages, see Cross, ‘“Ubi sunt” Passages,’ 41, and below, pp. 141–2.
- 166 ‘“Ubi sunt” Passages,’ 40.
- 167 Cameron no. B3.2.17 (HomS17); ed. Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, 54–65. See *Handlist*, no. 905; *Catalogue*, no. 382, art. 5; and Scragg. ‘The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,’ 234. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 21.

- 168 See above, n. 38, and below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 151–4.
- 169 Translation adapted from Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, 58.
- 170 Ed. Lehmann, *Die ‘Admonitio,’* 30–63.
- 171 ‘A Probable Source.’
- 172 See CPPMA IIB, no. 3596, and CPL, no. 1155a.
- 173 Ed. Norman, *The Anglo-Saxon Version*, 33–55. A more recent edition of Ælfric’s version is contained in Lawrence E. Mueller, ‘Ælfric’s Translation of St Basil’s *Admonitio ad Filium Spiritualem*: an Edition’ (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1974).
- 174 Rochais, *Livre d’étincelles*, 332–3. An extract which Defensor attributes to the *Admonitio* is in fact derived from Gregory’s *Homiliae in Ezechielem*: see MacCoull, ‘More Sources for the *Liber scintillarum*,’ 293.
- 175 Ed. Rochais, ‘Les prologues,’ 145–53; this shorter recension begins at [chapter 6](#) of the text edited by Lehmann: see *ibid.*, 154
- 176 The noun phrase *decursus aquarum* also occurs in Psalm I, 3, where it likewise conveys a transitory image.
- 177 Lehmann, *Die ‘Admonitio,’* 43, lines 4–12.
- 178 The corresponding passage of Ælfric’s translation is in Norman, *The Anglo-Saxon Version*, 51; interestingly, the Blickling version is much closer to the Latin original.
- 179 Cf. ‘A Probable Source,’ 361.
- 180 See the quotation from Wisdom V, 9, above, pp. 106–7.
- 181 My emphasis.
- 182 *Old English Homilies*, 195
- 183 Cross, ‘*The Dry Bones Speak*,’ 436, and *idem*, “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages.’
- 184 I am grateful to Prof. P. Lendinara for this suggestion.
- 185 See esp. chapters xxxii, 1 and xxxiii, 1–2, in Fontaine, *Traité de la nature*, 287 and 289.
- 186 See chapters xxxii and xxxiii of Bede’s *De natura rerum*, in Jones, *Beda Opera didascalica*. I, 221–2; on Isidore’s *De natura rerum* and its circulation in Anglo-Saxon England, see

above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 55–8.

- 187 See chapter xi, 9 of *De temporibus anni*, in Henel, *Ælfric's 'De temporibus anni,'* 76–81.
- 188 Kotzor, *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, II, 35–6.
- 189 Not all editors, however, agree that they are three distinct riddles. See at least Lapidge, 'Stoic Cosmology.'
- 190 In the ASPR edition this item is numbered lxxxiv. For the text of all these riddles and relevant bibliography, see Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*, I, 287–91, 311–12, 369, and 373–5, and II, 573–6. See also Lendinara, 'Aspetti della società germanica,' 3–10.
- 191 See Lendinara, 'Gli enigmi del Codice Exoniense,' 42–52, 56–8, and 63–71; see also above, nn. 185–6, and Williamson, *The Old English Riddles*, 130–3.
- 192 Smoke is also the subject of a simile in five Latin *ubi sunt* passages: see below, [chapter 6](#), pp. 149–59.
- 193 Irvine, *Old English Homilies*, 202, line 135.
- 194 Napier, *Wulfstan: Sammlung*, 264. See Cross, "'Ubi sunt' Passages,' 37, n. 50; see also above, n. 97.
- 195 Cameron no. B3.4.9 (HomU9); ed. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 90–104. See *Handlist*, no. 941; *Catalogue*, no. 394 art. 4; and Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies,' 229. For bibliography on this homily, see Bately, *A Preliminary Bibliography*, 36.
- 196 Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 88. On the soul-and-body material in Vercelli iv, see Di Sciacca, 'Due note,' 235–43, and Hall, 'The Psychedelic Transmogrification.'
- 197 Translation adapted from F.M. Clough, 'Vercelli Homily iv,' in *The Vercelli Book Homilies*, ed. Nicholson, 44.
- 198 Di Sciacca, 'The *ubi sunt* Motif,' and Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, 96.
- 199 Teresi, 'Mnemonic Transmission,' 98–99 and 115–16. An analogous phenomenon within Old English poetry has been labelled 'memorial transmission': see Orchard, 'Oral Tradition,' 117.
- 200 It may be worth noting that the concept that death brings

about the abrupt loss of all affections is also found in Blickling homilies v (59. 10–15) and x (111. 27–30). Unlike Vercelli iv, where the reference to the now estranged relatives and friends comes after the *ubi sunt* questions, in both Blickling homilies it immediately precedes the *ubi sunt* passage. In Blickling v in particular the relatives' hostile attitude is motivated by a morbid description of the decay of the body that makes it a revolting sight even to those who were once closest to the dead man.

- 201 On this phrase, see below, pp. 139–40.
- 202 Translation adapted from MacArthur, 'Vercelli Homily xxii,' in *The Vercelli Book Homilies*, ed. Nicholson, 150.
- 203 PL 40, 1341. The passage quoted from *Sermo* 58 is immediately followed by a series of *ubi sunt* questions, on which the corresponding passage in Blickling viii relies: see above, pp. 123–4.
- 204 See above, [chapter 4](#), pp. 77–9.
- 205 See above, pp. 126–7.
- 206 Both ed. Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*, I, 219–22 and 232–6; the relevant commentary is in II, 487–96 and 505–15; for relevant bibliography, see the related entries in the 'Index to the Bibliography,' II, 815–16. Quotations are from the two dedicated editions by Gordon, *The Seafarer*, and Dunning and Bliss, *The Wanderer*.
- 207 Ed. Krapp, *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, 165–7; the *ubi sunt* topos also features in the prose version of this Metre, but my discussion will focus on the verse translation: see below, n. 276.
- 208 For two recent comparative readings of the two poems, see Shippey, 'The Wanderer and The Seafarer,' 146–9, and Orchard, 'Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,' 19–20.
- 209 'The Wanderer and The Seafarer,' 146.
- 210 de Lacy, 'Thematic and Structural Affinities,' 127 and 129.
- 211 Ibid., 129; see also the comparative analysis of the Old English poem and Ecclesiastes at 129–33.
- 212 Di Sciacca, 'The *ubi sunt* Motif,' 365–6; Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 19; Matsuda, 'The *ubi sunt* Passages,' 66; and Shippey, 'The

Wanderer and *The Seafarer*,’ 146–7, 149, and 152–6.

213 Translation by Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 334.

214 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,’ 29. The relevant phrase in *Synonyma* II, 91 reads: ‘Breuis est huius mundi felicitas ...,’: see above, p. 106.

215 See above, pp. 116–17.

216 See above, pp. 112–13, 117, and 122.

217 In Vercelli x the phrase ‘þe gio wæron’ refers to the doublet ‘caseras cyningas’; the latter noun occurs twice, and the second time is modified by the phrase ‘þe we io cuðon’: see above, p. 122.

218 See above, p. 114. I have noted the occurrence of the phrase in question in the Macarius Homily and in the Latin tag of the *Sermo Augustini* independently of Gordon: cf. her *The Seafarer*, 25. A very similar phrase, ‘io hie wæron us gelice,’ occurs also in Vercelli xxii, line 125, within the section containing the exhortation to visit other people’s graves, where it refers to those who are now dead and translates quite faithfully the Latin source ‘fuit et ipse nobis similis’: see above, p. 136. Finally, an analogous phrase is also found in the *ubi sunt* passage of an Irish sermon, the *Sermo ad reges*, on which see Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 28, and below, p. 143.

219 Cross, ‘The Sayings of St Bernard.’

220 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,’ 30.

221 See above, pp. 112–13.

222 *The Seafarer*, 25–6, quotation at 25.

223 The bibliography on these topics is quite vast: a standard study is Letson, ‘The Poetic Content.’ For the homiletic component in *Beowulf*, see Orchard, *A Critical Companion to ‘Beowulf,’* 151–68. On the relationship between poetry and prose within the Vercelli Book, see the dedicated study by Randle, ‘The Homiletic Context,’ and Wright, ‘More Old English Poetry.’

224 *The Seafarer*, 25.

225 Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, 399–400.

226 Ed. Wilmar, ‘Catéchèses celtique,’ in his *Analecta reginensia*,

29–112. The relevant passage of the *Catechesis celtica* is not the direct source of Vercelli ix, but apparently the Vercelli homilist ‘had access to a closely similar variant text [of the *Catechesis*]’: Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, 99.

- 227 Ibid., 58–9, quotation at 59; see also Wright, ‘Catechesis celtica,’ in SASLC, 117–18; McNamara, ‘Irish Homilies,’ 267–72; and idem, ‘The Affiliations and Origins.’
- 228 Elfassi, ‘Trois aspects inattendus,’ 133–4; on the *Synonyma* as a source of the *Hibernensis*, see above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 46–7.
- 229 Ó Laoghaire, ‘Irish Elements,’ 163.
- 230 Wilmart, ‘Catéchèses celtique,’ in his *Analectia reginensia*, 44.
- 231 Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, 95–102; Wright identifies a further echo of the ‘five likenesses’ motif in lines 68–71 of *The Seafarer* and compares them with a passage in a Welsh poem: see *ibid.*, 101, n. 218.
- 232 See *ibid.*, 98–9; on the *Collectanea pseudo-Bedae*, see above, p. 119, and on the *De XII abusiuus*, see above, [chapter 3](#), p. 40 and below, pp. 143–4.
- 233 Bazire and Cross, *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, 71, lines 44–5.
- 234 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 37–8 and 62–8.
- 235 This definition was first coined in relation to the liturgy by Wilmart and eventually echoed by Sims-Williams: see Wilmart et al., *The Bobbio Missal*, 34, and Sims-Williams, ‘Thought, Word and Deed,’ 90. For a thorough discussion of this style, see Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, 49–105.
- 236 See above, [chapter 3](#), p. 38.
- 237 The standard study on these lines is Cross, ‘On *The Wanderer*.’
- 238 For a discussion of these ‘homiletic’ passages and relevant bibliography, see Dunning and Bliss, *The Wanderer*, 96 and 117–20; Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 25–37; and Orchard, ‘Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,’ 20–3.
- 239 Translation by Orchard, ‘Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,’ 4, n. 12.
- 240 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,” 41, esp. n. 71. In particular, Leslie has associated the *ubi sunt* lines of *The Wanderer* with the corresponding passage in *Sermo ad fratres* 58: see his *The*

Wanderer, 19.

241 'Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,' 26.

242 Ibid., 2–5, quotation at 2.

243 Woolf, '*The Wanderer, The Seafarer*,' 201. Likewise, the subjects of the exclamatory phrases also refer to the heroic society: see Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 19.

244 See above, pp. 122–4.

245 See above, pp. 123–4, 129, and 130.

246 Cf. *The Wanderer*, lines 64–72, and Vercelli x, lines 44–54.

247 Cf. *The Wanderer*, lines 92–6, and Vercelli x, lines 233–44; on the *ubi sunt* passage in Vercelli x, see above, pp. 116–23 and 132–4.

248 Cf. *The Wanderer*, lines 106–15, and Vercelli x, lines 254–75. For a thorough discussion of these three passages in the two texts, see Orchard, 'ReReading *The Wanderer*,' 20–6, quotation at 25.

249 Ed. Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, 61–5.

250 Both ed. Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*, I, 283–5 and 353–4; relevant commentary, II, 566–70 and 647; for bibliography, see the related entries in the 'Index to the Bibliography,' II, 816–17.

251 'Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,' 13–20; see also Shippey, '*The Wanderer and The Seafarer*,' 149–52. For further parallels and analogues of *The Wanderer* with other Old English poems, see Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 3–25.

252 Randle, 'The Homiletic Context,' 6; on *The Dream of the Rood* see [chapter 4](#) of Randle's thesis. On the reverse context, see Letson, 'The Poetic Content.'

253 Orchard, 'Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,' 18, and relevant bibliography, nn. 4 and 48. See also North, 'Boethius,' n. 3.

254 'On the Genre of *The Wanderer*,' 63. Cf. Dunning and Bliss, *The Wanderer*, 80–1.

255 '*The Wanderer*,' 40; see also Dunning and Bliss, *The Wanderer*, 83. Interestingly, the same frame of reference has been suggested for *Deor*: see Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 363–4. For the passage in question from *De consolatione philosophiae*,

see Moreschini, *De consolatione philosophiae*, 121–9.

256 ‘Boethius,’ 98.

257 Ibid., 76.

258 Ibid., 79–97.

259 See Auer, *Johannes von Dambach*, 65–72 and 245. On the fortune of Boethius’s *De consolatione philosophiae*, see Reiss, *Boethius*, and Courcelle, *La Consolation de la Philosophie*, 88, n. 4, and 241–52. On the adaptation and appropriation of Boethius’s text on the part of the Anglo-Saxons, see the Alfredian Boethius Project: <http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/boethius>.

260 Silk, ‘Boethius’s *Consolatio*’; see also above, chapter 2, pp. 16–18 and n. 3.

261 *The Wanderer*, 27. On the genre of *tecosca*, see Wright, ‘The Irish Tradition,’ 354–5.

262 See above, chapter 3, p. 40.

263 Wright, ‘The Irish Tradition,’ 355; on the fortune of this text in Anglo-Saxon England, see *ibid.*, and Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 29; see also below, chapter 6, n. 29.

264 See McNamara, ‘Irish Homilies,’ 272–83.

265 Ed. Atkinson, *The Passions and the Homilies*, 151–62, 401–13 (Irish text with relevant translation), and 414–18 (Latin text).

266 Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 27. Leslie suggests that the *ubi sunt* passage in Vercelli x might be related to the one in the *Sermo ad reges* too and points out that the Irish version of the latter also features a phrase equivalent to ‘swylce iu wæron’ of *The Seafarer* (line 83) and to ‘þe gio wæron’ of Vercelli x: see *ibid.*, 28; on the phrase in question, see above, pp. 139–40.

267 Ed. Meyer, *The Instructions of King Cormac MacAirt*, esp. 45.

268 Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 27; see also *ibid.*, 13–14.

269 *Ibid.*, 34–6; see also Shippey, ‘*The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*,’ 146–53, and Orchard, ‘Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,’ 10.

270 *The Wanderer*, 36–7.

271 *Ibid.*, 28.

272 *Ibid.*, 37.

- 273 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 37–40 and 62–8, and below, [chapter 7](#), p. 179.
- 274 Moreschini, *De consolatione philosophiae*, 53–4, lines 15–16.
- 275 Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 42–98.
- 276 For a recent discussion of the question of the authorship and relationship between the prose translation and verse one, see Buzzoni, ‘Traduzione interlinguistica ed endolinguistica,’ 209–18 and relevant bibliography.
- 277 Sedgfield, *King Alfred's Boethius*, 46.
- 278 Krapp, *The Paris Psalter*, 66.
- 279 Orchard, ‘Re-Reading *The Wanderer*,’ 5–8, quotation at 5; on the often ambiguous terms used by *The Wanderer*-poet to refer to God, see *ibid.*, 10.
- 280 Shippey, ‘*The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*,’ 156.
- 281 *A Critical Companion to 'Beowulf'*, 227–8.
- 282 See, among others, Thormann, ‘The Poetics of Absence,’ 547–9, and Wallerstein, ‘The *ubi sunt* Problem,’ 41–2; see also above, n. 281. But cf. Owen-Crocker, *The Four Funerals*, 61–84.
- 283 ‘The *ubi sunt* Problem,’ 42–3 and 45–7.
- 284 *Ibid.*, 53–5; see also Cunningham, “‘Where Are They?’,” 371.
- 285 Wallerstein, ‘The *ubi sunt* Problem,’ 54.
- 286 *Ibid.*, 51.
- 287 ‘*Sapientia, ubi sunt*,’ 161 and 169.
- 288 Harris, ‘A Nativist Approach,’ 56.
- 289 Garde, ‘*Sapientia, ubi sunt*,’ 160.
- 290 *Ibid.*; see also above, p. 106.
- 291 ‘*Sapientia, ubi sunt*,’ 161.
- 292 *Ibid.*, 162.
- 293 Leslie, *The Wanderer*, 26. See also above, n. 31.

6. The *Synonyma* in Anglo-Latin Literature

- 1 On this *Epistola*, see above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 48–9.

- 2 'Artful Alliteration,' 456–8.
- 3 Translation by Orchard, *ibid.*, 457, n. 92.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 448–58, quotation at 456. On Aldhelm's connections with Ireland, see above, [chapter 3](#), p. 50.
- 5 Orchard, 'Artful Alliteration,' 456.
- 6 For the *ubi sunt* passage from the *Synonyma*, see above, [chapter 5](#), p. 106.
- 7 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 48–9.
- 8 Ed. Tangl, *Die Briefe*, 4–7.
- 9 In both this letter and the next one the biblical quotations in Tangl's edition are fundamentally identical with the Vulgate text; I therefore will not signal the few minor differences with the latter.
- 10 For a recent study of the style and contents of this collection, see Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources.'
- 11 *Ibid.*, 23.
- 12 See above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 114–16.
- 13 See above, [chapter 5](#), n. 38. Interestingly, trees and flowers are also presented as symbols of man's transitory state in the section of Blickling v immediately preceding the *ubi sunt* questions: see Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, 59. 1–8; on the *ubi sunt* passage in Blickling v, see above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 131–4.
- 14 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 51–2, 58, 69, and 72–4.
- 15 'Old Sources, New Resources,' 36.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 18–19.
- 17 Ed. Tangl, *Die Briefe*, 146–55.
- 18 Translation adapted from Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*. I, 751–6, at 755–6.
- 19 See above, [chapter 5](#), p. 134.
- 20 See below, pp. 157–9. The smoke-simile also occurs in an *ubi sunt* passage within one of Alcuin's letters, but this passage

does not rely on the *Synonyma*: see below, pp. 155–6.

21 “‘Ubi sunt’ Passages,’ 37, n. 50.

22 See above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 106–7 and 132.

23 See above, pp. 151–2.

24 Weber signals two parallels from the Old Testament, namely Isaiah XL, 7, and Job XIV, 2, and three from the New Testament, namely Matthew XIII, 6, Mark IV, 6, and the First Letter of Peter I, 24.

25 See above, pp. 149 and 151.

26 Item 18 of Dümmler’s edition of Alcuin’s epistolary: see his *Alcuini Epistolae*, 49–52. See also the letter by a certain ‘Alcheritus’ included in one of Alcuin’s letterbooks, ed. Chase, *Two Alcuin Letter-Books*, 62–4, esp. 63. 50–6.

27 Cf. the quotation from the *Synonyma* above, [chapter 5](#), p. 106.

28 See the praise of Isidore in Alcuin’s *Aduersus Elipandum toletanum*, ptd. in PL 101, 231–300, at 266.

29 Ptd. PL 101, 613–38. On the content and structure of Alcuin’s *florilegium*, see Wallach, ‘Alcuin on Virtues and Vices,’ 175–80; Wallach’s essay is practically reprinted in his *Alcuin and Charlemagne*, 231–54. Apparently Alcuin was familiar with the Insular representative of the genre of the *speculum principis*, *De XII abusiuis saeculi*, in particular with the abuse of the *rex iniquus*, on which see above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 143–4.

30 Rochais, ‘Le “Liber de uirtutibus et uitiiis.”’

31 Wallach, ‘Alcuin on Virtues and Vices,’ 180–90. Besides the borrowings from the *Synonyma* already highlighted by Rochais and Wallach, I have noted that Alcuin’s *De uirtutibus et uitiiis* and the *Synonyma* share two quotations from Ecclesiasticus X, 13 (cf. *Synonyma* II, 21, and *De uirtutibus et uitiiis*, xxvii) and Proverbs XIX, 9 (cf. *Synonyma* II, 54, and *De uirtutibus et uitiiis*, xxi).

32 Item 86 of Dümmler’s edition, presumably dated 793 × 796: see his *Alcuini Epistolae*, 128–31.

- 33 See above, p. 153.
- 34 Item 13 of Dümmler's edition, dated c. 791–2: see his *Alcuini Epistolae*, 38–9.
- 35 Orchard, 'Wish You Were Here,' and Fox, 'Alcuin as Exile and Educator,' esp. 226. See also Allott, *Alcuin of York*, and Mary D. Garrison, 'Alcuin's World through His Letters and Verse' (unpubl. PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1996).
- 36 Item 294 of Dümmler's edition, dated c. 796 × 804: see his *Alcuini Epistolae*, 451–2.
- 37 On the attribution of this collection of penitential and canonical rules to Theodore of Canterbury, see at least Lapidge, 'The School of Theodore and Hadrian,' 144, and Di Sciacca, 'An Unpublished *ubi sunt* Piece,' 218, esp. n. 6.
- 38 *Handlist*, no. 59; *Catalogue*, no. 45; James, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, I, 452–63, esp. 462; and Budny, *Manuscript Art*, I, 535–44, esp. 541.
- 39 For relevant bibliography, see *ibid.*, I, 536–7 and 541; Jones, 'Two Composite Texts,' n. 8; and Sauer, 'The Transmission and Structure,' n. 3.
- 40 It occurs at pp 94.11–96.1 of the Corpus manuscript. Cross printed the *ubi sunt* lines of this text in a footnote: see his "'Ubi sunt" Passages,' 37, n. 51; a complete edition and English translation is in Di Sciacca, 'An Unpublished *ubi sunt* Piece,' 226–7; the authorship of the sermon is discussed *ibid.*, 222–4 and 240–2.
- 41 See above, p. 154.
- 42 Semi-diplomatic transcript from CCCC 190, p. 95.7–21.
- 43 'Wulfstan's Commonplace Book,' 922–3, esp. n. 28. Following the PL edition of the *Liber scintillarum*, Bethurum speaks of chapter lxxix, while in Rochais's edition, the chapter in question is number lxxx. Excerpts from the *Liber scintillarum* occur in the Corpus manuscript at pp. 264–81: see Di Sciacca, 'An Unpublished *ubi sunt* Piece,' 240–2.
- 44 See above, [chapter 5](#), p. 109. For a comparative analysis of the *ubi sunt* passages in the *Synonyma*, *Liber scintillarum*, and

CCCC 190, see Di Sciacca, ‘An Unpublished *ubi sunt* Piece,’ 226–30.

45 Cross, ‘“Ubi sunt” Passages,’ 36–8; see also Gilson, ‘De la bible à François Villon,’ 15.

46 CPL, no. 525; ed. Gastaldo, *Prosperi Liber sententiarum*, 213–365; the chapter in question is at 364–5.

47 CPG II, no. 2847, and Fedwick, *Bibliotheca basiliana Uniuersalis*, II. 2, 1042–7. The Greek text is ed. Rudberg, *L’homélie de Basile de Césarée*; the two Latin versions are ptd. in PL 31, 197–217 and 1733–44, and the *ubi sunt* passage is at 210–11 and 1740 respectively; the version closer to the Corpus passage is the former: see also the *apparatus fontium* in Gastaldo, *Prosperi Liber sententiarum*, 364. A further Greek version of Basil’s *ubi sunt* passage is contained in the *Sermo de morte*, a composite piece made up by genuine Basilian extracts excerpted by Symeon Metaphrastes, a tenth-century Byzantine hagiographer: see CPG II, no. 2908, and Rudberg, *L’homélie de Basile de Césarée*, 127–9; the *Sermo de morte* is ptd. in PG 32, 1255–78, and the *ubi sunt* passage is at 1262. Cross had indeed noted the similarities between the *ubi sunt* section within the *Sermo de morte* and the corresponding one in the Corpus manuscript: my thanks to T.N. Hall for sharing with me some private notes by the late Professor Cross. See further Di Sciacca, ‘An Unpublished *ubi sunt* Piece,’ 231–2.

48 See my discussion of the *ubi sunt* passages in Irvine vii, Blickling viii and x, above [chapter 5](#), pp. 123–5 and 128–30.

49 Ed. Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, 225–32. I am grateful to Prof. R.H. Bremmer Jr for drawing my attention to this homily.

50 See further Di Sciacca, ‘An Unpublished *ubi sunt* Piece,’ 247–8.

51 ‘Alliterierende und rhythmisierende Prosa,’ 36.

52 Olszewska, ‘Alliterative Phrases,’ and Koskeniemi, *Repetitive Word Pairs*, 47–51.

53 Orchard, ‘Crying Wolf,’ esp. 239–40 and relevant bibliography. Cf., however, Bethurum, *The Homilies of*

Wulfstan, 87–98, esp. 87–91, and Chapman, ‘Germanic Tradition and Latin Learning,’ 7–17.

54 *Ibid.*, 18.

55 ‘Un Livret,’ n. 5. See also Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 303.

56 *Ibid.*, 277.

57 Ms. Cambridge, UL, Ll. 1. 10 (Mercia, 820x840): see *Handlist*, no. 28; Sims-Williams, however, has suggested that this manuscript could be as early as 818: see his *Religion and Literature*, 274, n. 10. The texts of the *Book of Cerne* are ed. in Kuypers, *The Prayerbook of Aedeluald*. For a recent, full-scale study of this manuscript and its contents, see Brown, *The Book of Cerne*.

58 The prayer occurs at fols. 74v–75v, and is ed. Kuypers, *The Prayerbook of Aedeluald*, 148–50. See further below, pp. 160–1.

59 ‘Alcuin et les “Libelli precum,”’ 17 and 30–1.

60 The Escorial manuscript has been collated for the critical edition of the *Synonyma*: see Elfassi, ‘Una edición crítica,’ 106. The text of the *Synonyma* is found at fols. 1r–40v, while Alcuin’s *De laude Dei* is at fols. 93r–135r.

61 CPPMA IIB, no. 3382a, and Lambert, *Biblioteca hieronymiana manuscripta*, III B, no. 532; the Escorial manuscript is the earliest witness of the *Planctus*, which is otherwise attested in late, mostly fifteenth-century codices.

62 Alcuin’s *florilegium* is found at fols. 133r–161v. See Jullien and Perelman, *Auctores Galliae*, II, 140–1; *De laude Dei* is still unpublished in its entirety and only individual pieces are available in print: see *ibid.*, II, 141. However, an edition is being prepared by David Ganz and Susan Rankin.

63 F. Cabrol, ‘Alcuin,’ in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne*, I, 1071–92, at 1082.

64 ‘Alcuin et les “Libelli precum,”’ 17 and 30; Sims-Williams, ‘Thoughts on Ephrem,’ 220; and *idem*, *Religion and Literature*, 281–2, and 303.

- 65 Constantinescu, 'Alcuin et les "Libelli precum,"' 30–1; Wilmart, 'Un Livret,' 40; idem, 'Le Manuel', 289–90; idem, *Precum libelli*, 19–21; and Sims-Williams, 'Thoughts on Ephrem,' 212 and 217–18. The following survey of the prayers derived from the *Synonyma* is indebted to Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 112–24.
- 66 See above, n. 57.
- 67 Ms. Rome, Biblioteca Universitaria Alessandrina 98.
- 68 An edited text of this version of the prayer is in Gaetano, *S. Isidori scripta*, 103–6.
- 69 The *Officia* are contained in ms. Paris, BN, lat. 1153, fols. 1–98; ptd. in PL 101, 510–612; the prayer in question is at 605–6. It may be worth noting that the same manuscript contains a text of the *Synonyma*, beginning at fol. 99r: see Sims-Williams, 'Thoughts on Ephrem,' 212, n. 31. For other manuscript witnesses of this prayerbook, see Constantinescu, 'Alcuin et les "Libelli precum,"' 20, n. 13.
- 70 Ms. Boulogne-sur-Mer, BM, 20: see Sims-Williams, 'Thoughts on Ephrem,' 209–11, and Leroquais, *Les Psautiers*, I, 94–101, esp. 98.
- 71 Ms. Vatican City, BAV, Reg. lat. 12: see *Handlist*, no. 912; the text of the prayer in this manuscript is ed. Wilmart, 'The Prayers of the Bury Psalter,' no. xv, 207. See further Salmon, '*Analecta liturgica*,' 145, no. 186, and 156, no. 300.
- 72 Ms. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, 5235; the text of the prayer in this manuscript is ed. Gjerløw, '*Adoratio crucis*,' 123–4.
- 73 See above, p. 159.
- 74 This Psalter is contained in ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. lat. 96: see Sims-Williams, 'An Unpublished Anglo-Latin Letter,' 17–18, n. 31, and idem, 'Thought, Word and Deed,' 99, n. 126.
- 75 Ms. Troyes, BM 1742; the text of the prayer in this manuscript is ed. Wilmart, *Precum libelli*, 19–21.
- 76 See above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 107–8 and esp. n. 25.

- 77 Ms. Vatican City, BAV, lat. 517 (s. xiv/xv); the text of the prayer is ed. Assemani, *Ephrem Opera omnia graece et latine*, III, 578; see also *ibid.*, I, lxxxii, no. 31. Cf. Sims-Williams, 'Thoughts on Ephrem,' 217–18, n. 58.
- 78 Ms. Paris, BN, lat. 11550; the prayer in question occurs at fol. 315r and to my knowledge it is the earliest misattribution of an Isidorian prayer to Ephraem: see Leroquais, *Les Psautiers*, II, 105–10, esp. 108; cf. Sims-Williams, 'Thoughts on Ephrem,' 218.
- 79 These three manuscript witnesses are the *Officia per ferias*, on which see above, n. 69; the *Psalter of Odbert*, on which see above, n. 70; and a late twelfth-century Italian codex, Paris, BN, lat. 15497. The text of the prayer in question is ptd. within the *Officia per ferias* in PL 101, 604–5.
- 80 Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 120.
- 81 Ms. Munich, BS, Clm 4426 (s. xv); the prayer is at fols. 79v–82r.
- 82 Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 120–2.
- 83 See above, n. 81. The prayer beginning *Anima mea in angustiis est* immediately precedes the other and is found at fols. 77r–79v.
- 84 Munich, Universitätsbibliothek, 8° Cod., 193 (s. xv^{2/3}).
- 85 Ms. Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. ccxxix; of the other eight witnesses at least four also contain a version of the *Succurre mihi* prayer: see Elfassi, 'Trois aspects inattendus,' 123.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 123–4.
- 87 Ms. Orléans, BM 184 (s. ix, southeast Germany); ptd. PL 101, 1383–416; the prayer in question is at col. 1402.
- 88 See Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 151–5, and Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 274, n. 10.
- 89 'An Unpublished Anglo-Latin Letter,' 4; see further Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 193–200.
- 90 See above, p. 161.

- 91 Sims-Williams, 'Thought, Word and Deed', esp. 103, n. 153. The interpolation with the triad is also found in a later version of the prayer contained in the so-called *Missa Illyrica* composed c. 1030 for the church of Minden, Westfalia. The *Missa* is ptd. in PL 138, 1302–36 and the prayer in question is at 1317: see also Sims-Williams, 'An Unpublished Anglo-Latin Letter,' 17–18, n. 31, and idem, 'Thought, Word and Deed,' 103, n. 153.
- 92 McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church*, 9.
- 93 *BCLL*, no. 1281.
- 94 *Religion and Literature*, 309–10 and 317–18; see also Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, 99 and relevant bibliography.
- 95 *The Book of Cerne*, 181 and 37 respectively (my emphasis).
- 96 Ibid., 155; Brown lists the Cerne prayers of alleged Irish origin at 137–8; on the group of Mercian prayerbooks to which the *Book of Cerne* belongs, see *ibid.*, 151–5, and Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 273–327. Some textual parallels have also been pointed out between the *Book of Cerne* and two collections of definite Irish character, namely the *Florilegium frisingense* and the prayerbook from St Emmeran in ms. Munich, BS, Clm 14248, contemporary with the *Book of Cerne*: see Lehner, *Florilegium frisingense*, xxx–xxxiii; on the *Florilegium frisingense*, see above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 45–6.
- 97 See above, p. 159.
- 98 Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 303.
- 99 See above, pp. 159–60.
- 100 See above, p. 161.
- 101 See above, [chapter 2](#), p. 35.
- 102 See above, p. 161.
- 103 See Di Sciacca, 'The *ubi sunt* Motif,' 382–3 and relevant bibliography.
- 104 *Religion and Literature*, 289 and 303–4.
- 105 Sims-Williams, 'Thoughts on Ephrem,' 207–12.
- 106 This prayer occurs at fols. 71v–72r and is ed. Kuypers, *The*

Prayerbook of Aedeluald, 142–3.

107 Ed. *ibid.*, 141–2.

108 See Sims-Williams, ‘Thoughts on Ephrem,’ 209–10, and Kuypers, *The Prayerbook of Aedeluald*, 232–3. For a detailed list of the overlaps of the Cerne texts, see Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 41–3, 141–3, and 173–8; see also Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 273–327.

109 See above, n. 69.

110 Ptd. PL 101, 606.

111 See above, n. 69.

112 ‘Knowledge of Ephraim’s Writings,’ §12.

113 See Ganz’s list of ‘Surviving Manuscripts of the Latin Ephraim copied before c. 1030,’ *ibid.*, and Di Sciacca, ‘The *ubi sunt* Motif,’ 384–5.

114 ‘Knowledge of Ephraim’s Writings,’ §10.

115 See above, pp. 151–5, and [chapter 3](#), pp. 51–2, 58, 68–9, and 72–4.

116 *CPL*, no. 1143; ed. Fischer, *Libri S. Effrem*, 24–6. This sermon has been identified as the ultimate source for the overlapping opening section of the Macarius Homily and Vercelli iv: see Wright, ‘The Old English “Macarius” Homily.’

117 Ed. Fraipont, *Bedae Liber hymnorum*, 439–44.

118 Lendinara, ‘Alcuino e il *De die iudicii*,’ esp. 305–6, 309, and 321–4; Lapidge, ‘Bede and the “Versus de die iudicii”’; and *idem*, ‘Acca of Hexham,’ 65–73.

119 Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 298 and 306.

120 *Ibid.*, 319–24, esp. n. 71. For the theme of weeping in *De die iudicii*, see lines 4, 13–26, 38, 40–3; and lines 22–3 and 33 for the metaphor of *Christus medicus*.

121 For the theme of weeping, see *Synonyma*, I, 56–8 and 75; II, 12 and 24. For the metaphor of *Christus medicus*, see *Synonyma*, I, 71, 72, and 77.

122 *CPL*, no. 1227, and *CPPMA IIB*, no. 3435; ed. MGH, PLAC IV/2, 762–8. (For this and the following work I adopt the titles given by the editor.)

123 See *CPL*, no. 1533 and *CPPMA IIB*, no. 3436; ed. MGH, PLAC

IV/2, 770– 93.

- 124 See MGH, PLAC IV/2, 760, and Lendinara, ‘Alcuino e il *De die iudicii*,’ 324.
- 125 The *Exhortatio poenitendi* is in fact based on the poem *Carmen de satisfactione paenitentiae* by Verecundus (s. vi): see CPL, no. 869.
- 126 See *Exhortatio poenitendi*, lines 38–40, 48–9, 67, 75, 87, 89, 94, 98, 106, 134, 172; and *Lamentum poenitentiae*, lines 1–5, 11, 60, 136, 164, 175, 196–7, 225, 255–60, 285.
- 127 See *Exhortatio poenitendi*, lines 96 and 166; and *Lamentum poenitentiae*, lines 148–9, 168–70, 284, 293.
- 128 Lendinara, ‘Alcuino e il *De die iudicii*,’ 321–4.
- 129 Lapidge, ‘Surviving Booklists,’ 116–20; idem, ‘The Hermeneutic Style,’ 126, n. 2; and idem, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 54–5 and 134–6. See also above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 74–5.
- 130 ‘The Hermeneutic Style,’ 126; on the Winchester curriculum, see *ibid.*, 123–8.
- 131 Lapidge, ‘Surviving Booklists,’ 118, and Lendinara, ‘Introduction,’ in her *Anglo-Saxon Glosses and Glossaries*, 17–18.
- 132 Lapidge, ‘Surviving Booklists,’ 120.
- 133 In the booklist this text features as ‘Descidia parisiacae polis’: *ibid.*, 118; see also Lapidge, ‘The Hermeneutic Style,’ 126 and additional note at 477, and Lendinara, ‘The Third Book of the *Bella parisiacae urbis*,’ 157–8. See now also the verse translation and commentary of the whole poem by Adams and Rigg, ‘A Verse Translation,’ 21–68.
- 134 Lendinara, ‘The Third Book of the *Bella parisiacae urbis*,’ 169; idem, ‘The Abbo Glossary,’ 184–90; idem, ‘Competing with Abbo,’ 199–206; and idem, ‘Contextualized Lexicography,’ 113.
- 135 On this distinctive style, see the classic study by Lapidge, ‘The Hermeneutic Style’; see also Lendinara, ‘Contextualized Lexicography,’ 111.
- 136 Elfassi, ‘La langue des *Synonyma*,’ 94–6.
- 137 Among the numerous studies on this topic, see at least

Hofstetter, *Winchester und der späaltenglische Sprachgebrauch*; idem, 'Winchester and the Standardization'; Gretsche, 'Winchester Vocabulary'; idem, 'In Search of Standard Old English,' esp. 35–7; and idem, *The Intellectual Foundations*, 114 and 216.

138 See above, [chapter 1](#), n. 140.

139 Gneuss, 'The Study of Language,' 25–6; see also Bullough, 'The Educational Tradition.'

140 Lendinara, 'Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,' 221–2; M. Lapidge, 'Colloquies,' in *BEASE*, 117; and idem, 'The Study of Latin Texts,' 456.

141 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 17–18, and [chapter 5](#), p. 110.

142 See above, [chapter 3](#), p. 49.

143 Lendinara, 'Contextualized Lexicography,' 109–11 and 121.

144 Lendinara, 'Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,' 218–22; Porter, 'The Latin Syllabus'; and idem, 'Introduction,' in Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 34–43 and 51–7.

145 Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 166. 22–6.

146 Translation by Porter, *ibid.*, 167.

147 *Synonyma* I, 5, 19, and 21, in PL 83, 828–9 and 832.

148 For example, the two *commata* of the Isidorian source: 'circumclusus aduersis, obsitus miseriis' are joined in Bata's 'obrutus aduersis et miseriis,' or the Isidorian 'opertus infelicitate, oppressus angustiiis' are conflated into Bata's 'oppressus infelicitate et angustiiis.'

149 See above, [chapter 2](#), p. 30.

150 See below, pp. 168–9.

151 'Ælfric Bata's Manuscripts,' 241 and 245–6; on these two manuscripts, see above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 70–1. The Corpus and Harley manuscripts contain an extensive set of Latin glosses, two-thirds of which are practically identical, and which were probably copied down together with the main text of the *Synonyma* from a common glossed ancestor: see Di Sciaccia, 'The Manuscript Tradition,' 106–10.

152 CCCC 448, 41v14, and Harley 110, 26r6.

153 CCCC 448, 41v11.

- 154 Gwara, 'Ælfric Bata's Manuscripts,' 246.
- 155 For example, in his presentation of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of the *Synonyma*, Gwara omits the St Petersburg codex: see *ibid.*, 240–1, n. 8.
- 156 Harley 110, 26r3.
- 157 Cf. above, [chapter 3](#), p. 68.
- 158 CCCC 448, 45r9–10, and Harley 110, 28r9. The corresponding reading in the PL printed version is *fletus lacrimarum*: see *Synonyma* I, 17, in PL 83, 832.
- 159 'Ælfric Bata's Manuscripts,' 245.
- 160 See 2v1. The Vespasian reading is *fluuius lacrimarum*: see 175r19. The Würzburg manuscript reads *fluor lacrimarum* (p. 8. 17–18), and the Salisbury manuscript too reads *fluor lacrimarum* (75r11–12), but *fluor* has been corrected into *fluxus*.
- 161 'Ælfric Bata's Manuscripts,' 244, n. 23, and 245.
- 162 See above, [chapter 3](#), p. 70. See also M. Lapidge, 'Schools,' in *BEASE*, 407–9, and *idem*, 'The Study of Latin Texts,' 459 and 465–70; see also Lendinara, 'The World of Anglo-Saxon Learning.'
- 163 Di Sciacca, 'The Manuscript Tradition,' 106–10. See also Hussey, 'Ascetics and Aesthetics,' 306–11, where he speculatively presents the glosses to the *Synonyma* in the Harley and Vespasian manuscripts as complementary.
- 164 See above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 109–12.
- 165 Gneuss, however, has shown that composite though it may be, the Tiberius manuscript represents a one-volume unit: see his 'Origin and Provenance,' 15–16; see also Kornexl, 'The *Regularis concordia*,' esp. 107.
- 166 The other version of the *Regularis concordia* is contained in ms. London, BL, Cotton Faustina B. iii, 159r–198r. This manuscript is contemporary with the Tiberius codex and like the latter was written at Christ Church, Canterbury: *Handlist*, no. 332; see below, p. 171, and for a comparative analysis of the two versions, see Kornexl, 'The *Regularis concordia*,' 104–11.
- 167 See below, pp. 171–3.

- 168 This figure is based on Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance,' 14–15. Other scholars, however, detect a different number of continuously glossed texts in Tiberius A. iii: cf., for example, Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 68; this discrepancy is probably due to the difficulty of identifying and numbering exactly the individual items which make up the Tiberius miscellany: see Szarmach, 'A Return,' 167. Ker's relevant entry comprises thirty-one articles, with some of them in turn divided into subsections: see *Catalogue*, no. 186.
- 169 On the alleged didactic role of glossed manuscripts, see Lapidge, 'The Study of Latin Texts, I'; Page, 'The Study of Latin Texts, II'; idem, 'On the Feasibility of a Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Glosses,' esp. 80–93; Wieland, 'The Glossed Manuscript'; idem, 'Interpreting the Interpretation'; Stanton, *The Culture of Translation*, esp. [chapter 1](#).
- 170 'Introduction,' in Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 69.
- 171 *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*, 85–6; see also Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance,' 15, and Kornexl, *Die 'Regularis concordia'*, clxxxv–vi.
- 172 Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance,' 14–15; see also above, n. 165.
- 173 Liuzza, 'Anglo-Saxon Prognostics,' 208.
- 174 Szarmach, 'A Return,' 176.
- 175 *Catalogue*, no. 186, arts. 9 a–l, 10 b–g, 16, 17, 19, and 21.
- 176 Ed. Szarmach, 'Alfred's *Soliloquies*.' On the association between Augustine's *Soliloquia* and Isidore's *Synonyma*, see above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 16–18 and n. 3.
- 177 *Catalogue*, no. 186, arts. 26 and 27; ed. Szarmach, 'Cotton Tiberius A. iii, Arts. 26 and 27.'
- 178 See above, p. 155.
- 179 For the later manuscript, see *Catalogue*, no. 209, art. 35; on the earlier one, see above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 69–71. On the vernacular tradition of Alcuin's *Liber*, see Szarmach, 'Cotton Tiberius A. iii, Arts. 26 and 27,' 30, and relevant bibliography.
- 180 Ed. Szarmach, 'Pembroke College 25, Arts. 93–95.'

- 181 See above, [chapter 4](#), pp. 77–9.
- 182 See *Catalogue*, no. 186, at 241.
- 183 Bata possibly owned the codex, although another inscription in the manuscript (fol. 164) indicates in a certain monk Eadwi the owner of the codex ('Eadwi m[...] me ah'): see Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance,' 22–4; cf. Porter, 'Introduction,' in Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 2.
- 184 'Origin and Provenance,' 19–22, esp. 22. See also Lendinara, 'Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,' 217; but cf. Porter, 'Introduction,' in Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 2.
- 185 *Die 'Regularis concordia'*, cxxx–iv, and Kornexl, 'The *Regularis concordia*,' 108.
- 186 Besides the Tiberius manuscript and the Eastry catalogue, a certain *Ælfric cognomento Bata* is mentioned by Dunstan's biographers Osbern and Eadmer in connection with some disgraceful attempt to despoil Christ Church, Canterbury: see Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance,' 23; Kornexl, *Die 'Regularis concordia'*, cxxxiii–iv; and Lendinara, 'Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,' 212.
- 187 *Die 'Regularis concordia'*, cxxxiii–iv, quotation at cxxxiv. See also Porter, 'Introduction,' in Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 3, and Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance,' 22–3.
- 188 *Handlist*, nos. 686 and 775. See Lendinara, 'Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,' 208–16. The current edition of Ælfric's *Colloquy* is by Garmonsway, *Ælfric's Colloquy*, which is based on the Tiberius text. The Antwerp-London version of the *Colloquy* has recently been edited by Hill, 'Ælfric's Colloquy.'
- 189 Lendinara, 'Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,' 208–16 and 239–44.
- 190 *Ibid.*, 247–8; cf. Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style,' 136–7.
- 191 'Introduction,' in Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 43–4 and 68–9.
- 192 Lendinara, 'Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,' 249–50.
- 193 This word occurs, with various spellings, seven times in total in the whole Old English corpus: see Di Sciacca, 'The Manuscript Tradition,' n. 148 at 120.
- 194 'Introduction,' in Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon*

Conversations, 69 (my emphasis).

- 195 Ker dates the Oxford manuscript to s. xiⁱⁿ; see *Catalogue*, no. 362. Lendinara notes that the glosses ‘are, with one or two exceptions, written in the same hand as that of the text’: see her ‘Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,’ 248.
- 196 *Ibid.*, 226–39.
- 197 *Ibid.*, 245–8.
- 198 Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 166. 21–2.
- 199 Garmonsway, *Ælfric’s Colloquy*, 8.
- 200 Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 170. 16.
- 201 Garmonsway, *Ælfric’s Colloquy*, 280; see also Lendinara, ‘Ælfric and Ælfric Bata,’ 245–6. Gwara also associates the exclamation ‘Vae est mihi misero’ [Woe is to me wretched], which opens the oblate’s lament, with an analogous exclamation in Ælfric’s *Grammar*, but I think that it is clearly derived from the Isidorian source: see Gwara and Porter, *Anglo-Saxon Conversations*, 167, n. 337.
- 202 Gneuss, ‘Origin and Provenance,’ 19–43; cf. also Budny, ‘British Library Ms. Royal 1 E. vi,’ 246–53, and Gameson, ‘English Manuscript Art,’ 111–12, n. 55.
- 203 See above, p. 171.
- 204 See above, [chapter 3](#), p. 76, and below, [chapter 7](#), pp. 179–80.
- 205 See above, pp. 164–5.
- 206 Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 1.
- 207 Hofstetter, ‘Winchester and the Standardization,’ 157.
- 208 Gretsche, ‘In Search of Standard Old English,’ 36.
- 209 Hofstetter, ‘Winchester and the Standardization,’ 160.
- 210 Bestul, ‘Ephraim,’ 8–9; see also above, pp. 163–4.
- 211 ‘Liturgical Note,’ in Kuypers, *The Prayerbook of Aedeluald*, 234–83; see also above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 65–6.
- 212 ‘Liturgical Note,’ in Kuypers, *The Prayerbook of Aedeluald*, 277–80 and 282–3; see also Constantinescu, ‘Alcuin et les “Libelli precum,”’ 18. For a rebuttal of Bishop’s theses, see Sims-Williams, ‘Thoughts on Ephrem,’ 216–20; *idem*, *Religion*

and *Literature*, 313; and Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 139.

213 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 62–8.

214 Sims-Williams, ‘Thoughts on Ephrem,’ 217–18.

7. The *Synonyma* in Anglo-Saxon England: Some Conclusions

1 See above, [chapter 3](#), and [chapter 6](#), pp. 159–62.

2 See above, [chapter 3](#), p. 70.

3 See above, [chapter 4](#), pp. 77–9, and [chapter 5](#), pp. 135–7.

4 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 34–6, and [chapter 5](#), 109–12.

5 See above, [chapter 5](#).

6 See above, [chapter 6](#), pp. 149–52.

7 See above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 124–30.

8 See above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 112–16, 121–2, and 134–5; see also Di Sciacca, ‘The *ubi sunt* Motif,’ 366–80; idem, ‘Due note a tre omelie anglosassoni’; and Hall, ‘The Psychedelic Transmogrification.’

9 See, for example, Gatch, ‘Eschatology’; idem, ‘Two Uses of Apocrypha’; Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, chapters 2 and 3; Willard, *Two Apocrypha*; and Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, [chapter 3](#).

10 Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 87–110.

11 Ibid., 27 and 44.

12 Ed. Hillgarth, *S. Iuliani Opera*. I, 9–126. On the knowledge of Julian’s works in Anglo-Saxon England, see above, [chapter 3](#), p. 47, and Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 94–5.

13 Ibid., 44; on relevant bibliography, see n. 94. Apparently, Julian’s *Prognosticon* was a very popular text, as it featured ‘in over a hundred catalogues of medieval libraries, and was to be found, often in two or three copies, in almost all libraries from the ninth to the twelfth centuries’: Hillgarth, *S. Iuliani Opera*. I, xx–xxi.

14 See chapter xii, 32 (*De duplici paradiso*) of Isidore’s *De*

differentiis rerum, in PL 83, 75. Julian quotes this passage in his *Prognosticon* II, 1: see Hillgarth, *S. Iuliani Opera*. I, 44, lines 5–8.

- 15 Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 44; see also above, [chapter 1](#), pp. 5–6 and 9–10.
- 16 Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 93.
- 17 ‘Eschatology,’ 147; see also *ibid.*, 162–4.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 158. See also Di Sciacca, ‘The *ubi sunt* Motif,’ 372–5, and Teresi, ‘Mnemonic Transmission,’ 115.
- 19 Cf. *ibid.*
- 20 See above, [chapter 6](#), pp. 159–64.
- 21 Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 122–40, quotation at 124.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 127–34.
- 23 See above, [chapter 6](#), pp. 159–62.
- 24 Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 133.
- 25 *Ibid.*, [chapter 4](#).
- 26 This vision is contained in one of the surviving letters from Boniface to Abbess Eadburg: ed. Tangl, *Die Briefe*, 8–15; an English translation is in Kylie, *The English Correspondence*, 45–6; rptd. in Emerton, *The Letters*, 25–31. See also Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, chapter 9, and *idem*, ‘A Recension of Boniface’s Letter to Eadburg.’
- 27 *Historia ecclesiastica* V, 12, in Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, 488–99
- 28 *Paradise, Death and Doomsday*, 94–5.
- 29 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 62–8.
- 30 See above, p. 177 and n. 9.
- 31 See above, [chapter 3](#), p. 65 and n. 362.
- 32 Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, 215–71, and Biggs, ‘An Introduction and Overview,’ 21–3.
- 33 Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, chapter 10.

- 34 See above, [chapter 6](#), p. 162.
- 35 See above, [chapter 3](#), pp. 66–8.
- 36 See Di Sciacca, ‘The *ubi sunt* Motif,’ 386–7, and idem, ‘Due note a tre omelie anglosassoni.’ Also the palaeographical evidence afforded by a manuscript such as St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 908, confirms the association between the *Synonyma* and ‘a remarkable number’ of texts and traditions of apocryphal content which were distinctively popular with the Irish: see Wright, ‘Apocryphal Lore and Insular Tradition,’ 125, and above, [chapter 2](#), p. 35, and [chapter 3](#), p. 64.
- 37 See above, [chapter 2](#), pp. 24–31, and [chapter 5](#), pp. 140–1.
- 38 Scragg, ‘The Significance of the Vercelli Book,’ 42; see also Gatch, *Preaching and Theology*, 57; Clayton, ‘Homiliaries and Preaching,’ 172–3; and above, [chapter 4](#), p. 77.
- 39 See above, [chapter 5](#), pp. 116–17.
- 40 Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies*, lxxiv.
- 41 Idem, ‘The Significance of the Vercelli Book,’ 37.
- 42 Idem, *The Vercelli Homilies*, xix and xx.
- 43 Ibid., xx, and xxxvii–viii.
- 44 Ibid., lxxiv–ix, quotation at lxxiv; see also Di Sciacca, ‘The *ubi sunt* Motif,’ 379–80.
- 45 See above, [chapter 3](#), p. 76.
- 46 See above, [chapter 6](#), pp. 164–74.

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